

Outlines of the  
History of German Literature

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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# Outlines of the History of German Literature

BY

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## PREFACE.

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THE present little volume is long overdue; it was originally my intention to accompany my *History of German Literature* with a briefer introduction to the subject, and a considerable part of the present book dates back to the time of my occupation with the *History*. The point of view from which I have regarded the subject will be found to be not essentially different from that of the larger book; and, as in the latter, I have considered it advisable to keep as far as possible to accepted judgments, rather than to obtrude divergent personal views which in a book of this scope there is not room to support. The economy of space compared with the larger book has been attained by the suppression of detail concerning minor writers; the chief writers and works have, on the other hand, been dealt with on what may seem a disproportionate scale. But this is inevitable in a small book. Apart from this, my effort has been rather to lay down general lines



of development than to heap up biographical or critical detail. The book has been provided with somewhat extensive chronological tables; the reader will, I believe, find the parallel tabulation of events in English and other literatures useful in helping him to "place" the phenomena and movements of German literature.

To my colleague, Prof. R. Priebisch, I have to express my warm thanks for his valuable aid in reading the proof-sheets of the earlier chapters.

J. G. ROBERTSON.

LONDON, *October* 1911.

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# Outlines of the History of German Literature

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## INTRODUCTORY.

THE race-name by which we designate to-day the dominating nation on the European continent has undergone several changes of definition. Originally, if we may trust a probable Keltic derivation of the word, applied to the "neighbouring" tribes, which the Roman invaders of Gaul found opposing them on the banks of the Rhine, the word "German" has been adopted by us to describe the people who know themselves as "Deutsche." German or Deutsch was the strong empire which, for centuries, in the darker epochs of European history, held the balance between the nationalities of the continent; German or Deutsch was the name by which the small German-speaking states of Northern Europe had, since the close of the Middle Ages, described the common bond that held them together; and German or Deutsch is the new empire which emerged from the last great European war. The word, however, calls up, in the first instance, a racial and linguistic tie, not a political one, and German literature means for us not the literature of the German Empire alone, but also that of the German-speaking population of Austria and Switzerland.

This interpretation of the word "German" as "German-speaking" is, however, subject to considerable modification when we penetrate a few centuries back into the past of the people whose literature we have to study. The early history of all literatures is, of necessity, a history of writings in dialects, not in one recognised national speech; and this is particularly true in the present case. Centuries elapsed before the German races became the possessors of a common literary language; and a history like the present has, in its earlier chapters, to take cognisance of the poetic expression of many races, speaking widely different dialects.

The various stages in the History of the German Language afford obviously the most natural divisions for a history of the works written in that language. An Old High German Period of linguistic growth was followed by a Middle High German Period, and this, again, by a New, or Modern High German Period. In the same way we are able to distinguish three great stages of development in the literature: I. The Old High German Period, extending from about 750 to 1050, a period of tentative beginnings, composed in many dialects, the most important monuments being, indeed, not in High German at all, but in Low German; II. The Middle High German Period, from about 1050 to about 1350, which includes the flourishing-period of German mediæval poetry, a period of great but short-lived intensity at the beginning of the thirteenth century; and III. The Modern High German Period, from about 1350 onwards. It is usual to subdivide this last period into an Early New High German Period, extending to about the end of the seventeenth century, an age in which the language was still more or less in a condition of flux, and a later period embracing the two last centuries, in which Modern German had attained its definite classical form.

This grouping of German literature is not, however, based merely on linguistic distinctions. The literature itself, which in its development was peculiarly chequered and irregular, falls naturally into the divisions that have

been mentioned. Between the Old High German Period and the Middle High German Period there was a complete break in the literary tradition, or at least in the records of that tradition, hardly a line having come down to us in the vernacular from a period little short of a century; and between Middle High German poetry and the new beginnings of the Reformation century lay an age of depression and mediocre achievement which more effectually broke the continuity of mediæval traditions than the social changes which ushered in the modern period. Again, the century of the Thirty Years' War—a century comparatively barren in literary production in Germany—intervened between the period of the Reformation and the classicism of the eighteenth century. And, if a division has to be made in the enormous literary production since 1700, the two words "Classic" and "Romantic" which stand, in Germany at least, for two diametrically opposed literary creeds, make it possible to draw a boundary line between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

## CHAPTER I.

## THE OLD HIGH GERMAN PERIOD.

WHEN we first meet the Germanic races on the threshold of history, they consist of scattered tribes, more or less unsettled, occupying the great plains of north-western Europe, the peninsula of Scandinavia, and even extending as far south-east as the lower reaches of the Danube. Our knowledge of these peoples in the first century of our era is drawn from Roman writers, from Julius Cæsar who had fought against them, and from Tacitus, who described them in his *Germania* (written in 98) and *Annals*. Like all primitive races, the ancient Germans possessed an unwritten poetry. Tacitus tells us that they celebrated their heroes in song, and they had also hymns and battle-songs. But we have no actual records from this early period; and, indeed, it is unlikely that the art of writing was known to the Germans of whom Tacitus wrote. Their Runic alphabet, a rough imitation of some of the Latin letters, was not in general use for inscriptions until at least the end of the second century.

The Germanic race, which had made its home on the Lower Danube—a branch of the group known as Goths—was, as a consequence of its proximity to the older civilisations of the south of Europe, intellectually the most advanced. About the middle of the fourth century, long before any other Germanic people possessed a written literature, and when England was still a Roman province, a bishop of these Goths, Wulfila, or, according to the Greek form of the name, Ulphilas, conceived the plan of

giving his people the Bible in their own tongue. Wulfila, who lived from 311 to about 382, and was consecrated in 341, not only translated into a language which had never before been employed for literary purposes, but he had to invent the very letters which he used. He adopted the Greek alphabet, helping out its deficiencies with the Latin and Runic alphabets. Only a small part of the Gothic Bible has been preserved to us, and that mainly the gospels, but it is of inestimable importance for the history of the Germanic languages. Regarded as a translation, it also shows literary skill of a high order; for the Gothic language attained in Wulfila's hands a flexibility and a grace which it would be difficult to parallel in the early history of any other Germanic dialect.

This brilliant beginning to a Gothic literature was, however, only a beginning; Wulfila virtually stands alone; and at the end of the fourth century a great catastrophe broke over the Germanic world which retarded immeasurably the intellectual growth of these races. The Huns, a wild Mongolian horde, broke into Europe from the East, and drove the Germans out of their settlements. In the fierce struggles of the so-called "Völkerwanderung" or Migrations, the distribution of nationalities over the face of Europe was completely changed and the Roman Empire received a shock from which it never recovered. And just as in ancient Greece the conflicts of opposing races on the coasts of Asia Minor provided the materials out of which the national epic of the Greeks was formed, so we owe to the Migrations the national epic-sagas of the Germanic races. The stories of Siegfried and Attila, of the Burgundians, who had been annihilated by the Huns in 437, and of Ermanarich and Theodorich, gradually took shape amidst these struggles for national existence. Often, too, old nature-myths, the common heritage of all the Aryan peoples, were, in the sagas, associated and blended with the historical events. But centuries of oral tradition had to elapse before they crystallised into literature in the *Eddas* of the Scandinavians and the *Nibelungenlied* of the Germans. The continental Ger-



manic races—to whom we have henceforth to limit ourselves—were naturally more exposed to such unsettling conflicts than their cousins in Scandinavia or in England, and their intellectual awakening was proportionately longer in coming; the Anglo-Saxons had their epic of *Beowulf* long before we have evidence of any similar development among the Germans.

Beyond two interesting charms, the so-called *Merseburg Charms* (*Merseburger Zaubersprüche*), of a wholly heathen nature, only one fragment of early German literature points back indubitably to the heroic time of the Migrations. This is the *Hildebrandslied* or *Lay of Hildebrand*, written about 800 in the monastery of Fulda; it is only a fragment of sixty-eight lines of alliterative verse, this being the primitive form of Germanic poetry in which the links binding the lines together consist, not of end-rhymes, but of accentuated syllables beginning with the same sound. Hildebrand is a vassal of Theodorich's, who, when the latter is defeated by Odoaker, flees eastward and takes refuge with the Huns. Thirty years elapse, and the old warrior is now on his way home to wife and child. He finds himself confronted by a young fighter in whom he recognises his own son Hadubrand; he joyfully offers the youth the arm-ring which Attila has given him. But the impetuous Hadubrand only sees in the old man's generosity a ruse to escape a conflict; he insists on measuring arms with him. Hildebrand pleads in vain, and the fight takes place. The fragment breaks off here, but there is little doubt that the story ended tragically: Hadubrand is slain by his own father.

This grim tragedy, which meets us on the very threshold of German literature, is one of the most precious specimens of primitive literature we possess; it is also much the most interesting literary monument that has come down to us from the earliest period of German literary history. The magnificent directness and intensity of this old lay, the fierceness of its irony, seem to take us back to the very headspring of tragedy. The

heathen spirit has also left its traces on an alliterative fragment of a prayer, the so-called *Wessobrunner Gebet* (end of the eighth century), which opens with some lines describing the creation of the world ; and it appears again in the fragmentary *Muspilli* (ca. 850), where the end of the world is described by a poet whose imagination had possibly been fired by the early Germanic conception of that catastrophe.

But however much or little of pre-Christian ideas these literary fragments contain, not one of them is, in the form in which it has been preserved to us, older than the reign of Charles the Great. With this great German emperor, called by his French-speaking subjects Charlemagne, the centre of political power in Europe was for the first time established north of the Alps ; he welded his people, the Franks, into a great nation which dominated the Romanised portion of Gaul as well as all the West Germanic tribes of the continent. The history of German literature as a written literature begins with Charles the Great, whose reign extended from 768 to 814. When Charles came into power, one of his first cares was to strengthen the hands of the Church, which had already, thanks mainly to the Anglo-Saxon "Apostle of the Germans," Winfrith or Bonifacius (ca. 680-755), gained a hold upon the German peoples. He encouraged the scholarly activity of the monasteries and impressed upon the monks the necessity of interpreting the doctrines of Christianity to the people in their own tongue. Thus the majority of the earliest specimens of the German vernacular at the close of the eighth and beginning of the ninth centuries consist of Latin-German vocabularies or Glosses, translations of the Church liturgy and the like. The best of these translations from the time of Charles the Great is one of a theological tract by the Church Father Isidore, and a fragment of this with part of the Gospel of St Matthew and two sermons is also preserved in the *Monseer Fragmente*, from the monastery of Monsee in Upper Austria. These are much superior to the more voluminous translation of Tatian's *Gospel - Harmony*

(*Evangelienharmonie*), made some thirty years later (about 835) in the monastery of Fulda, a monastery which, under the great churchman, Rabanus Maurus, had become, together with Reichenau and St Gall, one of the chief fountainheads of light in these dark ages. Charles the Great's interest in the intellectual welfare of his nation was not, however, limited to ecclesiastical and scholastic reforms; he concerned himself with their secular culture and even had a collection made of the songs of the people.

The two lengthiest monuments of old German poetry belong to the ninth century. These are the *Heliand* ("The Saviour"), together with fragments of *Genesis*, written about 830 in Old Saxon alliterative verse, during the reign of Charles the Great's son and successor, Ludwig the Pious, and the *Evangelienbuch* or *Gospel-Book*, composed more than thirty years later by the Alsatian monk Otfrid. The familiarity which the unknown poet of the *Heliand* and *Genesis*—which were possibly only parts of a version of the entire Bible—shows with the form of the old Germanic epic has led to the belief that he was one of those wandering singers who are to be met with all through the dark ages of European history at the courts of kings and nobles. From the subject and treatment of his poem we might perhaps also infer that part of his life, at least, had been passed in a monastery, probably not far from the sea, in the low-lying land between Weser and Elbe; this at least is the scenery which forms the background of the poem. On the other hand, there is considerable ground for the opinion that this Old Saxon biblical poem is not the work of one hand. The *Heliand* is a genuine epic of the life of Christ based on the Gospels, or rather on a Harmony of the four Gospels; its language is simple and noble, ornamented only by the direct and forcible phrases of the old alliterative speech. Christ is here a prince who shows favour to his faithful followers by bestowing, like the hero of a Germanic saga, gifts of arm-rings on them; the places he moves among, "Nazareth-

burg," "Bethleemburg," "Rumuburg" (Rome), are the Saxon villages with which the poet was familiar. Incidents that might lower the hero in the listener's estimation, such as the entry into Jerusalem on the ass, are either omitted or glossed over, and the old Germanic virtues of faithfulness and loyalty kept continually in the foreground.

The *Evangelienbuch* or *Gospel-Book* of Otfrid is, as poetry, much less interesting than the *Heliand*. It is not only strongly influenced by Latin models and by the theological speculation of the time, but it is also divided into sections which correspond to the pericopes or lessons of the church service. We know little more of Otfrid than that he was a monk of the monastery of Weissenburg; he may have been born about 800, and lived to about 871; his poem appears to have been written subsequent to 863. Didactic and poetically uninspired as Otfrid's verses for the most part are, they mark more definitely an epoch in the history of German literature than the *Heliand*. The *Heliand* was the last great poem in alliterative verse; Otfrid's *Gospel-Book* is the first German poem in rhymed verse. Otfrid's influence is possibly to be traced on the sparing remains of religious poetry that have been preserved from the later Old High German period, such as the *Bittgesang an den heiligen Petrus, Christus und die Samariterin*, and *Das Lied vom heiligen Georg*. Of a secular lyric poetry in this period no traces have been preserved, and it is very doubtful if the so-called "winileod," prohibited by a Church decree of Charles the Great's time, come under this heading. The *Ludwigslied* (881), a song in honour of a victory of one of the later Carolingians, Ludwig III., although monkish in spirit, may be regarded as the earliest ballad in German literature. *De Heinrico*, a short political poem composed about 1000 and referring to Otto I. and Heinrich I., may also be mentioned here; it is written in alternating Latin and German lines.

The ninth century, with its two Biblical epics, remains the brightest in the dim Old High German period. Thus,

chronologically speaking, we might say that the flourishing-time of this literature lay between the chief period of Old English poetry and that of Old English prose. The Carolingian empire was in 842 divided between Charles the Great's two grandsons, Ludwig and Charles; and this division, which marks the beginning of the independent growth of the two great nationalities of France and Germany, has left its literary record in the *Strassburger Eide* (842), oaths sworn by the two kings in the two languages, at Strassburg. The later Carolingian rulers of the eastern Frankish kingdom were not, however, encouragers of literature and learning; a new period of darkness set in with them, and this darkness only deepened, as far as vernacular literature was concerned, under the successors of the Carolingians, the Saxon dynasty (919-1024). The Saxon emperors had other and sterner tasks before them in maintaining the integrity of their empire against aggressive neighbours, than that of caring for the spiritual welfare or literature of their people. But the old sagas continued, notwithstanding, to live on on the lips of the people, kept alive by the wandering "gleemen" or "Spielleute," whose importance for the life of those times was rapidly growing.

There was, however, a kind of literary renaissance under the Saxon emperors, a renaissance that was, it is true, Latin both in its speech and in its ideas; but it produced a few works which cannot be overlooked in a history of German literature. The first of these is the Latin epic, *Waltharius*, written about 930 by Ekkehard, a monk of the monastery of St Gall; a monastery which, all through the tenth and part of the eleventh centuries, formed an intellectual focus in Southern Germany. Written in polished Latin hexameters, the *Lay of Waltharius*, or *Waltherilied*, is a version of one of the national sagas which arose out of the Migrations of the fifth century: it is a national poem in Latin garb. Walther of Aquitaine and his betrothed, Hildegund of Burgundy, escape from the court of Attila, King of the Huns, who has held them as hostages. They ultimately reach the Rhine, near Worms;

Gunther, the Frankish king, who reigns at Worms, sets out with twelve chosen vassals to intercept the fugitives and take possession of their treasure, to which Gunther lays claim. One after the other Walther overcomes and slays the king's vassals, until only Gunther, Hagen, and he are left. In a desperate encounter all three are disabled, and Walther is allowed to proceed on his way in peace.

Another Latin poem of this time, the *Ecbasis Captivi* ("Escape of the Captive"), written about 940 by a monk of Lorraine, is interesting as the earliest example of the "Tierepos" or "beast epic." Under the guise of a calf, which strays into the forest and is seized by a wolf, but is ultimately rescued, the poet writes an allegory of his own life. The poem, however, has no great merit as literature. More interesting, and also more German in spirit, is the first romance in German literature, the Latin poem known as *Ruodlieb*, which was written in the monastery of Tegernsee, in Bavaria, about the year 1030. Ruodlieb goes out to seek his fortune in foreign lands, and comes to the court of a king, into whose service he enters; he distinguishes himself here both as hunter and soldier. After ten years he proposes to return home, and the king remunerates him with two loaves of bread in which are concealed money and treasures, and with twelve maxims, which Ruodlieb prizes above all material riches. The poet evidently intended that his hero should go through adventures on his journey home, each of which should illustrate practically the wisdom of one of the king's maxims. The poem, however, is fragmentary, and the plan is only partially carried out. *Ruodlieb* is the one poem of its time which foreshadows the literary developments of the coming centuries; for it contains in germ much of what developed later into the epic of chivalry.

The Saxon nun, Hrotsuith, or Roswitha of Gandersheim, who lived in the second half of the tenth century, wrote a number of Christian dramas on the model of Terence, to counteract the latter's evil influence in the monasteries, although to the modern mind the antidote seems sometimes worse than the poison. Hrotsuith has

been claimed as the first German-born dramatist. Her plays, however, are only legends in dialogue form, and have no qualities that distinguish them as German; she is a purely Latin writer of this Latin renaissance.

But there was one man in this age of Latin culture who interested himself seriously in the language of his people, namely, the head of the convent school in the monastery of St Gall, who is variously known as Notker III., Notker the German, and Notker Labeo ("the thick-lipped"). He lived from 952 to 1022, and was consequently very nearly the exact contemporary of the Anglo-Saxon Aelfric. Besides purely Latin writings, Notker has left a number of manuscripts of works used in the school—Boethius's *De consolatione philosophiæ*, Aristotle's *Categories* and *Hermeneutics*, that strange allegorical treatise by Marcius Capella, so popular in the Middle Ages, *The Marriage of Philology and Mercury*,—and these, for the benefit of his pupils, he interpreted into the vernacular, every few words of Latin being accompanied by an equivalent translation. Notker's translations are, however, a good deal more than mere schoolman's work; they show often considerable literary skill and a sense for the beauty and music of German words, such as no other German of the tenth or eleventh centuries possessed. Notker also wrote a few shorter treatises, collected under the title *De musica*, exclusively in German.

It is usual to designate the period which comes to a close with Notker of St Gall as the Old High German period of German literature, after the dialect or group of dialects then spoken in southern Germany. But it is well to remember that by no means all the literary remains that have come down to us are in High German dialects; the most important of all, the *Heliand*, is in Old Saxon, and the *Hildebrandslied* contains Low German elements which imply that its preservation was due to a Low German tradition.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE BEGINNINGS OF MIDDLE HIGH GERMAN POETRY.

THE revival of German vernacular poetry after its long sleep of more than a century was slow and tentative. The absence of written records undoubtedly facilitated a great change which, at the beginning of the twelfth century, came over the Old High German dialects. The degeneration—if degeneration it may be called—to which all languages unfixed by a written literature are prone, had proceeded rapidly throughout the eleventh century, and about the year 1100 the High German speech reappears denuded of the varied flexional endings and the wide range of vowel sounds which made Old High German the richest and most musical of all the older Germanic dialects. Middle High German speech, compared with its predecessor, seems colourless and monotonous; its phonology has become simplified, the *a*, *i*, *o*, and *u* of the original flexions being, for the most part, reduced to a uniform *e*; and its accidence has undergone a similar levelling process.

The growth of a secular literature was retarded by the religious temper of the time; for in the eleventh century a wave of monastic asceticism, which originated in the Burgundian monastery of Cluny, spread over Europe and was directly hostile to any literature not immediately in the service of the Church. The very sparing literary remains which we meet with at the beginning of the Middle High German period are filled with a disconsolate asceticism and a bitter contempt for



the world. This spirit is to be seen in a monkish poem *Memento mori*, written in Alemannian soon after the middle of the eleventh century, and in a still more acute form, in a long poetic exposition of the Nicene Creed, *Vom Glauben*, composed early in the twelfth century by a monk of Thuringia, named Hartmann. A less negative aspect of the Christianity of the time is to be seen in the spirited *Ezzolied*, or *Lay of Ezzo* (1063), which was written at the command of Bishop Gunther of Bamberg. The *Ezzolied* goes back to the beginning of things, and describes the birth, life, and death of Christ. About the same time Willeram, abbot of Ebersberg in Bavaria, paraphrased and commented in prose upon the *Song of Songs* (*Das hohe Lied*). A lighter, less depressing tone is noticeable, too, in poetic versions of the stories of the Old Testament (*Genesis*, *Exodus*), while the lyric feeling of the time found almost its only outlet in a number of *Marienlieder*, in which the worship of the Virgin rises at times to extravagant adoration; to this category belong also three beautiful *Lieder von der Jungfrau* (ca. 1170) by a priest, Wernher, who was probably a Bavarian. A Frau Ava who lived in Austria in the first quarter of the twelfth century has left several religious poems; and a little later (ca. 1160), Heinrich von Melk, in Austria, mingled asceticism with satire and didacticism in his *Remembrance of Death* (*Von des tôdes gehugede*) and *Priesterleben*. Mysticism, the chief undercurrent in the spiritual life of the twelfth century, has left its traces on a number of smaller German poems, such as *Von den vier Rädern*, *Anegenge* ("beginning"), and the so-called *Vorauer Genesis* of about the year 1130.

The bridge between the religious and secular poetry of the twelfth century was formed by a large number of legends of the saints, of which the earliest is the so-called *Annolied*, written probably before the end of the eleventh century by a clerical poet of the monastery of Siegburg near Cologne. Anno, whose life and death the poem celebrates, was a famous bishop of Cologne, who played

an active part in political life; but the poem, like the *Ezzolied*, goes back to the Creation, and describes the spread of Christianity down to the founding of Cologne. Legends, too, form a considerable part of the *Kaiserchronik*, a vast poetic chronicle which begins with the history of Rome and comes down to the middle of the twelfth century. This work, which was probably written in Regensburg between 1130 and 1150, was one of the most popular books of the Middle Ages.

So far, the writing of poetry had lain mainly in the hands of monks, or at least lay-brothers; but now with the encroachments of the secular spirit a different type of poet came into evidence; this was the "Spielmann," whom we have already met with in Old High German times, but whom the ascetic religious movement had for a time succeeded in silencing. The influence of the "Spielleute" is to be traced in several biblical narrative poems written in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries; but we do not meet with undisguised "Spielmann's poetry" until the middle of the twelfth century. To a wandering singer of this class is due the first German epic based on a national saga, namely *König Rother*, which was probably written in Bavaria about the year 1160. This epic is an excellent example of the light, sprightly kind of narrative intended for an uncultured audience, such as we associate with the Spielleute. The unnamed poet is not concerned with finer characterisation or psychological probings; he is content to tell a story that will interest and amuse by its incidents alone. King Rother, whose seat is at Bari in Italy, chooses as his bride the daughter of a king of Constantinople, and the sons of Duke Berchter of Meran are sent as envoys to demand her hand. The King of Constantinople, however, throws the envoys into prison, and Rother, disguised as a Spielmann, sets out to free them and to win his bride himself. He succeeds in obtaining an interview with the princess and learns that she will wed none but King Rother. The sons of Berchter are set free, and under Rother's leadership they do the King of

Constantinople a service by vanquishing one of his enemies. On leaving Constantinople they carry off the princess in their ship. An obvious continuation of the original story tells how the latter is brought back to her parents, and Rother is obliged to undergo fresh adventures to win her again.

The influence of the Crusades on *König Rother* is apparent in the fact that the hero seeks his bride in the East; that influence is still more marked on a second epic of this period, *Herzog Ernst* (ca. 1180). This poem is based on the popular traditions of two different Dukes of Swabia. After taking vengeance on the enemies who have calumniated him, Duke Ernst sets out on a crusade; he meets with the most extraordinary adventures in the East, finds people with cranes' heads and with webbed feet, pigmies, giants, and all kinds of natural wonders. As poetry, *Herzog Ernst* is lacking in the personal note of the Spielmann's poetry, which makes *König Rother* so interesting; it is even doubtful if it was written by a Spielmann at all. On the other hand, poems like *Salman und Morolf*, *Orendel*, and *Oswald*, in each of which the theme of *König Rother* recurs in a more or less modified form, may be regarded as typical specimens of the Spielmann's epic at the close of the twelfth century.

The Crusades were responsible for a great deal more in German literature than the oriental scenery of *König Rother* and the oriental lore of romances like *Herzog Ernst*; to them we owe the social type of the Middle Ages, the knight or "Ritter," in whom the religious and secular ideals of the time were blended and reconciled. This type was restricted to no one land or nationality, and consequently created a basis of common sympathy and understanding for the intellectual life of all Europe. The idea of chivalry developed, however, most rapidly in Provence, and from there the literature of chivalry spread to other lands. This new spirit is to be seen in two German epics of French origin, which belong to a period anterior to the middle of the twelfth century, the *Alexanderlied* and the *Rolandslied*.

The life of Alexander the Great had, at a comparatively early date, been made the subject of romance, and the hero's adventures in the unknown East gave the successive poets who described them an opportunity for introducing, with their own embellishments, the legendary lore which was current in Europe about the Orient. Lamprecht, a German priest of the Rhineland, was the author of the oldest German version; it was written about 1130 and is based on a French *Chanson d'Alixandre*. After conquering Italy, Sicily, Asia, and Africa, Alexander reaches the end of the world, where the heavens are seen turning round it like a wheel on its axle, but through lack of humility he fails to add the Garden of Paradise to his conquests. A gentler lyric beauty appears occasionally in the poem, but, on the whole, it is adapted to appeal to the rough spirit of adventure which inspired the early Crusades. The second epic, the German version of the *Chanson de Roland*, was the work of a priest, Konrad of Regensburg, to whom the *Kaiserchronik* has also been ascribed, and was written about the year 1135; but the German *Rolandslied* is less able to do justice to its theme than the *Alexanderlied*, and is dominated throughout by a narrow monastic fanaticism.

A more immediate forerunner of the courtly epic of the thirteenth century than either Lamprecht or Konrad is Eilhart von Oberge, a vassal of Heinrich the Lion; about the year 1180 Eilhart produced the earliest German version of the story of Tristan. There is little of the literary polish which we associate with the Arthurian epic about this *Tristrant*, but the polite standpoint of chivalrous society is maintained throughout. The new social ideals were rapidly gaining ground in the literature of the time, a feature which is also evident in other epic romances of the time, such as *Floris und Blancheflur*, a story in which love plays almost as large a rôle as in *Tristan*. The Beast epic, too, which, as we have seen, had appeared in Germany with the Latin *Ecbasis Captivi* of the tenth century, took more definite form about 1150 in a Latin poem, *Isengrimus*, written in Ghent, and then

rapidly developed in the hands of French poets, as the *Roman de Renart*. The earliest German epic of the fox was written in imitation of this French romance about 1180 by an Alsatian poet who called himself Heinrich der Glîchezâre ("the dissembler").

No less fruitful was the influence of the Crusades on the development of the German lyric. Lyric poetry, in which the German national spirit has, in all times, found its truest expression, is but sparingly represented in the record of the earlier period, partly because owing to its nature it more readily escaped being written down than the longer and less easily remembered narrative poems. A "Liebesgruss" embedded in the Latin epic of *Ruodlieb*, and the so-called *Carmina Burana*, a Bavarian collection—which is for the most part Latin—of the songs of the Goliards or wandering scholars, are almost the only vestiges. The lyric first becomes a constant element in German literature with the rise of the Minnesang, that is to say, a form of poetry analogous to the lyric of chivalry cultivated by the troubadours of Southern France. To the group of German singers who form what has been called the "springtime of the Minnesang" (ca. 1160-80) belong an Austrian nobleman who appears as the "Herr von Kûrenberg," Dietmar von Aist, also an Austrian, the Burggraf von Regensburg, and Meinloh von Sevelingen. The lyrics of these singers are primitive in their simplicity, and describe simple lyric scenes and situations in the most direct language and often with an unconscious touch of naïve pathos. Kûrenberg composed in a form of strophe similar to that of the *Nibelungenlied*, while Dietmar von Aist has given us the earliest German "Tagelied," that is to say, a poem analogous to the Provençal "alba" or French "aube," in which two lovers are warned of the approach of dawn. Even at this early date we find evidence of that didacticism and satire which were to form so important a constituent of later German mediæval literature, namely, in the so-called "Spruchdichtung," which comprises short, one-strophe poems in a reflective and often pessimistic tone. As

“Spruchdichter” of this early time two are known to us, one probably called Herger, the other “Der Spervogel.”

In the slow development of dramatic literature Germany forms no exception to the rule of European nations; and the course of that development shows little divergence from the general norm. The modern drama was evolved in Germany as elsewhere from the church liturgy. In the tenth century the Easter and Christmas services were invested with a certain dramatic character; the events celebrated at these festivals were narrated by the priests in dialogue, and even acted. This was the beginning of the Easter and Passion plays. Opportunity for a more secular development was afforded by the representation of the events of Christ's birth, celebrated at Epiphany, such, for instance, as the arrival of the Wise Men of the East, the Slaughter of the Innocents, and the Flight into Egypt. A German *Dreikönigsspiel* in Latin verse has been preserved from the eleventh century. Another step in the direction of secularisation was taken when the stories of the Old Testament were included in these representations of sacred history. As the church drama thus became more secular and elaborate, it was performed outside the churches, often in the market-places; and as laymen were gradually drawn into the performances, Latin had to give way to the vernacular. But even in the twelfth century very little progress had been made, and the most interesting plays of that century—an elaborate work produced at Regensburg in 1194 which represented the creation of the angels, the dethronement of Lucifer, the creation of the world and the Fall, and a Latin *Anti-christ* play from the monastery of Tegernsee (1188), which reflected faintly the spirit of the German people in the days of Barbarossa—can hardly be considered as constituting a dramatic literature. For the real awakening of her drama Germany had to wait until the beginning of the sixteenth century and the influence of the Reformation.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE POPULAR EPIC.

THE narrative poetry of the German Middle Ages falls, according to the subjects of which it treats, into two main groups, the Popular or National Epic and the Court Epic. In the present chapter we have to deal with the first of these types of epic: it is national in so far as its themes are taken from German history and tradition, and popular in so far as the traditions were handed down by the people and thrown into epic form by "Spielleute" or popular singers. The line of demarcation between the two kinds of poetry is, however, by no means so clear as the above definition might imply, and many of the popular epics received their final form from poets who were schooled in the art of the Court epic.

The beginnings of the German national epic are, as we have seen, to be looked for in the stormy history of the Migrations. The famous deeds of the kings of the Ostrogoths, Ermanarich and Theodorich the Great, who appears in the sagas as Dietrich von Bern (*i.e.*, Verona), formed the nucleus of one great group of stories; epic materials were also provided by the annihilation of the Burgundians and their king Gundahari by the Huns in 437, an event which made a deep impression on the Germanic imagination, and was brought into connection with the tragic end of Attila, king of the Huns, in 453. An important group of sagas which gathered round the figure of Siegfried of Xanten, seems to have been especially developed by the Frankish tribes on the Rhine;

while, standing more isolated, a number of stories of the sea sprang up amongst the Low German peoples of the coast. These sagas were handed down through the centuries by oral tradition, and provided the materials from which the unnamed German poets of the close of the twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth centuries wove their epics. By far the most important of these is *Der Nibelunge Not* or *Das Nibelungenlied*, the national epic of the German people, which was composed in Austria, probably in the last decade of the twelfth century.

The theme of this epic is the result of a fusion between two originally quite distinct traditions, the Frankish saga of Siegfried, who wins a great treasure and goes through an adventure similar to that which is familiar to us from the story of the "sleeping beauty," with the more immediately historical accounts of the Burgundians. This race had settled on the Rhine early in the fifth century, and owing to the fertile character of their territory, they were associated with an older mythical saga of a treasure or "hoard" which lay sunk in the Rhine; it was this same treasure which Siegfried had once wrested from its original possessors, the Nibelungs or children of darkness, and to the Burgundians the name Nibelung is transferred. At Worms, on the Rhine, King Gunther holds his court; here live, too, his mother Ute, his sister Kriemhild, and two brothers Gernot and Giselher. Of the many faithful vassals of the king, Hagen von Tronege occupies the first place. The tragedy of the epic is foreshadowed by a dream of Kriemhild's at the opening of the poem: she sees a wild falcon which she had tamed, torn by two eagles. The falcon, her mother tells her, is a husband; whereupon she will hear nothing of marriage. But it happens otherwise. Siegfried, son of a king of the Netherlands, arrives as a stranger at Worms, where only Hagen recognises in him the hero who slew the dragon and bathed himself invulnerable in its blood. Kriemhild and Siegfried find favour in each other's eyes. Meanwhile Siegfried not only assists Gunther against his enemies, but is persuaded to help the Burgundian king to win



as his bride a princess of Iceland, Brünhild. At this point we seem to come upon an older stratum of the poem, which becomes clearer when we turn to the Scandinavian version. According to the latter, this Brünhild was originally a Valkyrie, a daughter of Wodan himself; and although the German poet of the twelfth century seems ignorant of this, he retains the superhuman elements in Brünhild's character, especially her enormous physical strength. The hero who would win her must overcome her in three tests of bodily prowess, in throwing the spear, in hurling the stone, and in leaping; otherwise he must pay the penalty of his temerity with his life. Gunther, himself unable to stand these tests, is assisted by Siegfried, who, by means of his "tarnkappe," or mantle of invisibility, stands at his friend's side during the contest. Brünhild is overcome and returns with the Burgundians across the sea to Worms, where a double marriage is celebrated: Gunther and Brünhild, Siegfried and Kriemhild. But Brünhild, as we know from the northern version, and as the German poet apparently did not know, had once been rescued by no other than Siegfried himself from the fire which her angry father, Wodan, had raised round her for protecting, in disobedience to his commands, the race of the Volsungs, and she is far from contented as Gunther's queen. She envies Kriemhild her husband, and reproaches Gunther for having without reason given his sister to a mere bondsman. And once more, before the marriage has been consummated, Siegfried is obliged to aid Gunther in overcoming Brünhild's supernatural strength.

After the lapse of ten years, Kriemhild and Siegfried, who has in the meantime succeeded to the throne of the Netherlands, return to Worms. The years have not cooled Brünhild's resentment, and it breaks out afresh in a quarrel with Kriemhild as to the worth of their respective husbands; in a stormy scene before the minster, Kriemhild in blind rage calls Brünhild Siegfried's mistress, and as proof shows her the ring and the girdle which

Siegfried had wrested from her. Siegfried's denial brings no conviction to the angry Brünhild, and she listens willingly to Hagen's councils: Siegfried, as a traitor to his king, must die.

A plot is schemed by Hagen. He causes false messengers to arrive with a declaration of war against Gunther, whereupon Siegfried offers his services against the enemy. Kriemhild blindly entrusts her husband to Hagen's care, and in order that he may know how to protect him in case of need, she sews with her own hand a cross upon his coat on the spot where the leaf fell when he bathed himself in the dragon's blood, the only spot where he is vulnerable. This information is sufficient for Hagen; the rumours of war are contradicted, and a hunt proposed instead. The description of this hunt in the forest of the Vosges, or according to another version, in the Odenwald, is fresh and vivid; and the events of the day, including Siegfried's capture of a bear, are dwelt on with that ironic objectivity which, as we have seen, was characteristic of the Spielmann's art. Meanwhile midday has arrived, but there is no wine for the midday meal. Hagen, however, knows a spring in the neighbourhood and proposes to race to it; Siegfried is the first to reach it, but he will not drink before the king; then, as he bends down to the water, Hagen plunges Siegfried's own spear into the vulnerable spot on his back. With no arms at hand but his shield, Siegfried is helpless, but before the blow of the shield Hagen flees, as he had never fled before. So Siegfried's life-blood ebbs away, and at night the body is carried home and, by Hagen's order, laid before Kriemhild's door. In the morning, even before she had seen the body, Kriemhild has a presentiment that her husband has been murdered, and with heartrending shrieks vows revenge upon his murderer. And when the body is laid out in the minster, the wound bleeds again at Hagen's approach, showing him to have done the deed. Kriemhild remains in Worms, whither she has had the Nibelung's hoard brought; but the far-seeing Hagen, fearful lest this wealth might give

her undue power, has the treasure sunk in the Rhine. Thus the first part of the tragedy closes with an echo of one of the very oldest motives in the saga, that of the Nibelung's gold.

Thirteen years pass away, and Kriemhild marries again. Her second husband is the powerful King Etzel or Attila of Hunnenland. She has only married him on the condition that he will obtain for her amends for the wrongs that have been done her. Another thirteen years pass away, and still the thought of vengeance is present to her. At last the time seems ripe to put it in execution. At her request King Etzel invites her kinsfolk to a great festival; two Spielleute are sent to Burgundy with special instructions to see that, if the invitation is accepted, Hagen at least does not remain behind. Despite Hagen's warnings, the Burgundians, or, as the poet now calls them, the Nibelungs, set out on their journey to Etzel's kingdom. When they reach the Danube, two water-sprites prophesy to Hagen that of all his brave company none but the chaplain will ever see his home again. As they are being ferried across the river, Hagen determines to make the prophecy naught in, at least one particular, by throwing the chaplain into the river; but the latter swims to the shore, and Hagen realises grimly that nothing can now avert the fate that awaits them. They are entertained on the way by the Markgraf Rüdiger, and warned by Dietrich of Bern, who rides out to meet them. Etzel has made hospitable preparations for his visitors, but Kriemhild receives them coldly; only for her youngest brother Giselher has she a kiss. In defiant hatred she demands of Hagen why he has not brought with him her treasure. The Nibelungs refuse to divest themselves of their arms; Hagen admits that he was Siegfried's murderer, and that it is Siegfried's sword he wears by his side. The guests retire to rest in a hall, where Hagen and the Spielmann Volker of Alzei keep watch and prevent the night attack which the Huns had planned. Next day at a tournament a noble Hun is slain by Volker, and this is the signal for an open feud. At Kriemhild's wish,

her brother-in-law Blödelin treacherously attacks a body of the Nibelungs, and in retaliation Hagen strikes off the head of Kriemhild's son, Ortlieb. The struggle now becomes general, and only by Dietrich's intercession is it possible for Etzel, Kriemhild, and some six hundred men to leave the hall. In the night Kriemhild commands the hall to be set on fire, and when morning dawns the survivors of the terrible ordeal are once more attacked by the avenging Huns; one after the other the leaders of the Nibelungs fall, until only Gunther and Hagen are left; these are overcome and made prisoners by Dietrich. They are brought before the queen, who once more demands of Hagen her treasure, but he refuses to reveal where it is concealed as long as any of his masters live, whereupon Kriemhild orders her brother to be beheaded and the head brought to Hagen. But still he will not tell, and with her own hand Kriemhild draws from his side Siegfried's sword and strikes off his head. Then Dietrich's vassal Hildebrand avenges Hagen's shameful death by slaying Kriemhild.

The origin of the *Nibelungenlied* is still a very vexed question. Suffice it to say that the poem, as we know it, was probably preceded by a Rhenish epic of the twelfth century, perhaps even by a still older Latin poem on the subject. The strength of the *Nibelungenlied* lies, above all things, in its unity of construction; it is based on one fundamental and primitive idea, which is expressed in the opening of the poem and recurs again at the close, the idea that human happiness must be paid for in the end by suffering; "nach liebe leit," the inevitable retribution that follows on excess of earthly joy. This is the ethical idea in the background of the whole; and the motives which actuate the characters are unflinching loyalty of man to master on the one side, and on the other an unswerving desire for vengeance, with which is associated the baser motive of the greed for gold. The literary qualities of this national epic are rather rugged strength and unveiled directness than poetic subtlety or intellectual grace; the poem is essentially

Germanic, the Christian and chivalric element being but a superficial veneer added at a later period. At the same time, the *Nibelungenlied* is neither uncouth nor barbaric, nor is it lacking in scenes of gentler beauty and humour; but its beauty is primitive in its simplicity, and its humour grim in its subtle irony. A later poet attempted to carry the story beyond the culminating catastrophe in *Die Klage*, a poem of much inferior merit, in which the survivors mourn for the fallen heroes; but this poem has little of the heroism of the great age, and was evidently composed merely to satisfy the popular craving for a continuation.

The *Nibelungenlied* has been called the *Iliad* of the Germanic peoples; in a similar way, the second of the great national epics, *Gudrun*, might be compared with the *Odyssey*. The two poems present similar points of contrast to the Greek epics: the *Nibelungenlied* is a lurid tragedy of revenge, full of wild passions and fierce slaughters, involving the fates of whole peoples; *Gudrun*, or *Kudrun*, is an epic of the sea, a story of adventure and of loyal affection, rewarded in the end; it centres, not in a nation, but in an individual heroine. The inequality between the *Nibelungenlied* and *Gudrun* is, however, greater than that between *Iliad* and *Odyssey*; the second epic is more dependent upon the first, and is further removed from the original primitive basis. The broad lines of the *Nibelungenlied* are lacking in *Gudrun*; its construction is loose and uncertain, being dependent more on fortuitous accretions from without, on repetitions of motives and episodes, than on the natural development of a carefully moulded plan. On the other hand, *Gudrun* has the advantage of a milder, gentler conception of life; the spirit of Christianity has sunk deeper into it, and the graces of chivalric ideals make its characters, above all that of the heroine herself, more human and lovable. In its original form, *Gudrun* was an epic of the Germanic tribes dwelling on the North Sea coasts; it belonged to the same cycle of sagas which includes the Old English *Beowulf*. But of this original form nothing has

come down to us, and we are entirely dependent for our knowledge of the poem on an Austrian version written probably between 1210 and 1215.

The epic of *Gudrun* falls into two more or less parallel halves, the first of which relates the story of Gudrun's mother, Hilde, the second of Gudrun herself. More than this, the first four cantos or "Aventiuren" of the poem tell the story of Gudrun's grandfather, Hagen, who as a child had been carried off to a lonely island by a griffin, and had there found three beautiful princesses, one of whom, Hilde of India, becomes his wife. Their daughter, likewise called Hilde, is protected by her jealous father from all wooers, until she is ultimately won by a Scandinavian king, Hettel, who employs ingenious ruses. With three of his vassals, the sweet singer Horand, the generous Frute, and the grim Wate, he sets out disguised as a merchant to Hagen's home in Ireland, and Horand's singing wins him a private audience with Hilde; he presses his master's suit, and finds no unwilling ear. The court is invited to inspect the wares which the strangers have on board their ships; as soon as Hilde and her retinue are safely on board one of the ships, the men of the party are thrown overboard and Hettel makes good his flight, leaving Hilde's father in helpless wrath on the shore. But Hagen gives chase, and overtakes the fugitives as they reach Scandinavia. A fierce battle takes place on the shore, in which both kings are wounded before Hilde succeeds in interceding as peacemaker. Hettel and Hilde have a son, Orwin, and a daughter, Gudrun, the latter even more beautiful than her mother. Gudrun is guarded no less carefully by her father than Hilde had been guarded by Hagen, but King Herwig of Seeland has won her heart, and after a similar battle with Gudrun's father she is betrothed to Herwig. Here, however, the parallelism of the stories ends. A disappointed suitor of Gudrun, Siegfried of Morland, now makes war on King Herwig, and Hettel goes to the latter's assistance, leaving his own land unprotected. This is the opportunity for a third suitor, Hartmut,

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who, with his father, King Ludwig of Ormandie, or Normandy, sweeps down on Hettel's land and carries off Gudrun and her maidens. Hettel gives chase, but in a terrible battle on the island of Wülpensand, off the Dutch coast, he is defeated and slain by King Ludwig.

Gudrun is brought by her captors to Normandy, but she refuses to become Hartmut's wife, and is treated with great cruelty, being condemned to the most menial of tasks. Years pass and her lot becomes harder and harder; for five years and a half, even in the depth of winter, she is compelled to kneel by the sea day after day washing clothes. Thirteen years have now elapsed since the battle on the Wülpensand, and Hettel's people, the Hegelingen, feel themselves strong enough to avenge themselves on the Normans; they set out for Normandy, and an angel in the form of a bird brings Gudrun tidings of her coming rescue. Next morning as she and her faithful maid, Hildburg, are washing barefoot in the snow, a boat approaches with two men in it; they are Gudrun's brother, Ortwin, and her betrothed, Herwig. First, Gudrun tells them that the Gudrun whom they seek is long dead, whereupon the men burst into tears; but the rings she and Herwig had exchanged lead to a recognition. Next morning the Hegelingen attack the castle, a fearful slaughter ensues, no less sanguinary than that at the close of the *Nibelungenlied*. The poem, however, does not close so tragically, for Gudrun is united to Herwig, her brother marries the Norman princess Ortrun, and the young king of Normandy—his father and mother have been both slain—marries the faithful Hildburg.

Besides the two great epics there is a large body of popular epic romance of varying poetic value, ranging from the crudest Spielmann's epics to poems hardly distinguishable, except by their theme, from the Court epics. It is usual to group these popular epics together under the collective title of *Das Heldenbuch*. The connecting link in these romances is the figure of Theodorich the Great, or, as he is known to poetry, Dietrich von Bern. In most of them he is the central figure, or at least

stands to them in a relation similar to that in which King Arthur stands to the knights whose adventures are related in the Court epic. But in a higher degree than Arthur or Charles the Great, higher even than Siegfried, Dietrich was the national German ideal of a hero; even in the *Nibelungenlied* itself we find an echo of this sentiment; brave and strong as Siegfried is, Dietrich is surrounded by a mysterious halo of reverence as the incorporation of all Siegfried's virtues, and of supreme wisdom as well; he is the ideal of the wise, strong man. In one of the epics of this cycle, *Der Rosengarten*, for instance, which describes the various conflicts that took place round Kriemhild's "rose-garden" at Worms, even Siegfried is obliged to flee before Dietrich and seek protection with Kriemhild. Siegfried and Dietrich appear again as opposing combatants in the epic of *Biterolf und Dietlieb*, written in Austria at the beginning of the thirteenth century, a poem in which the influence of the Court poetry is strong.

In a number of these romances the folklore of supernatural adventure, so beloved by the popular Spielmann, plays a large rôle; dwarfs and giants are the enemies against whom these heroes have to prove their mettle. This is seen in the charming story of *Laurin, oder der kleine Rosengarten*, in which the rose-garden of Worms is transferred to Tyrol; its boundaries here are only marked off by a silken thread, and it is watched over by a dwarf Laurin. Every intruder is condemned to lose his right foot and his left hand. Dietrich and Witege undertake to punish the dwarf; and they compel him to open up his subterranean kingdom. The cunning Laurin, however, again gets them into his power by means of a sleeping-draught, and another chain of adventures has to be gone through before he is finally overcome. But giants are the favourite embodiments of evil in these stories, as in *Das Eckenlied*, which is written in strophes of thirteen lines each, *Sigenot*, *Goldemar*, and *Virginal*.

For poetic beauty and strength the first place among the poems of the Dietrich cycle belongs to the fragmentary

epic of *Alpharts Tod*. In this story of a brave young hero who goes out to fight against uneven odds, and ultimately falls at the hand of Witege whose life he had spared, we alone find something of that tragic singleness of purpose and epic dignity which are characteristic of the *Nibelungenlied*. The last two epics of the cycle, *Dietrichs Flucht* and *Die Rabenschlacht* (i.e., "battle of Ravenna"), belong by the nature of their themes to the main constituents of what, under more favourable circumstances, might have been a national epic with Dietrich as central figure; but unfortunately they were both written at the close of the thirteenth century, long after the best epoch of the popular epic was past. In the foreground of the action stands Dietrich's feud with Ermanarich, the treason of his own vassals, Witege and Heime, and the alliance of Dietrich with the King of the Huns, Etzel. But the innate nobility of the old epic has disappeared; the interest is eked out with supernatural motives borrowed from the lower Spielmann's poetry, and the style is diffuse and wanting in distinction.

Not all the stories of the *Heldenbuch*, however, belong to the Dietrich saga in its narrower sense. *Ortnit* and *Wolfdietrich*—the latter a long, confused epic which has been preserved in several versions—are characteristic Spielmann's epics, which have but a remote connection with the other poems of the collection. *Ortnit* is the familiar story of a king—he is here king of Lamparten or Lombardy—who seeks his bride in foreign lands and carries her off by stealth. His father-in-law takes revenge by sending a brood of young dragons into Ortnit's land, one of which kills him. Connected with this story is that of Wolfdietrich, who at the close of the former poem came to the court of Ortnit and successfully vanquished the dragons. Wolfdietrich is the son of King Hugdietrich of Constantinople, and as a child he shows such amazing strength that the king believes the devil and not himself must be the real father. He consequently entrusts his faithful vassal, Duke Berchtung, with the task of killing the child. Berchtung has not the heart to carry out

his master's commands, but leaves Woldietrich beside a pool of water in the hope that he will try to pluck the water-lilies and fall in and be drowned. But this does not happen, and at night when the beasts of the forest come down to the pool to drink they leave the child unmolested, a group of wolves even sitting round him watching him in the moonlight. Next day Berchtung gives the child to a peasant to bring up, and the father subsequently repents. Hugdietrich has, however, already divided his kingdom among his other sons, and Woldietrich goes empty-handed; a feud arises with the brothers, in which Woldietrich's whole army is annihilated except the faithful Berchtung, his ten sons, and Woldietrich himself. It is at this point in the story that he escapes to Lombardy. In a subsequent series of adventures he rescues Berchtung's sons, who are prisoners in Constantinople, and avenges himself on his enemies.

These are, in brief summary, the sagas which make up the national epic of the German people; they go far back, as we have seen, into German history, back to the age of the Migrations, and even beyond it; for there is possibly a dim, unconscious echo in them of a still earlier and more primitive poetry, in which the forces of nature, the seeming victory of light over darkness, of sunshine over storm, of summer over winter, are reflected. This epic literature, moreover, was not merely a possession of the Middle Ages, but was revived again in succeeding epochs, in the prose romances and ballads of the period before and after the Reformation, in the eighteenth century as soon as the fetters of classicism had been broken, and in the drama of the nineteenth century from La Motte Fouqué to Hebbel and Wagner.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE COURT EPIC.

THE second of the two main divisions into which the narrative poetry of the Middle Ages falls is the Court Epic. It is distinguished from the Popular Epic, which has just been discussed, not so much by an essential difference of treatment, of poet, or even of the public to which it appealed, as by a difference in the materials of which it was composed. The themes of the Court Epic are mainly taken from the vast body of story and tradition that grew up round the figure of King Arthur and the knights of his Round Table; these stories were seized upon by French poets, who made them a kind of mirror of the polite life of the twelfth century, and from France they were imported into Germany. The civilisation they describe was wholly different from that of the national sagas; and their conventions and customs were originally as foreign to Germany as their themes. It is true, the point of view, even in the earliest attempts to naturalise the French epic, was, to the best of the adapter's ability, focussed to German eyes; but, as a rule, the German poets of the Court Epic did not allow themselves much freedom of invention, and consequently a good deal besides the mere incidents of the story was taken over from the French poems. It is this which makes these adaptations often appear exotic when compared with the epics on national themes.

We have already seen how a courtly type of epic had begun to differentiate itself from the older German narra-

tive literature, in the poems of Lamprecht, Konrad, and, most noticeable of all, in the *Tristrant* of Eilhart von Oberge. But the real founder of the Court Epic in Germany was Heinrich von Veldeke, a poet whose home was at Maestricht in the Low Lands. His earliest poem seems to have been a translation of the legend of Saint *Servatius*; he then began, about the year 1175, to prepare a German version of the French *Roman d'Enéas*; but this was not finished until about 1186. Heinrich von Veldeke's *Eneit* is the first German Court Epic of importance. The main features of this translation of Virgil into terms of the Middle Ages—especially the quite unclassic adaptation of the love episodes to suit the ideals of the age of chivalry—are naturally also to be found in the French original; but Heinrich von Veldeke is not a literal translator, and the alterations which he makes, do not always seem to be due to exigencies of metre or rhyme; he thinks the French poet's thoughts over again, and in an essentially German way. His poem is thus German in something more than its language. A little later than Heinrich von Veldeke, and obviously inspired by him, a Hessian poet, Herbolt von Fritslar, prepared, under the patronage of the Landgraf Hermann of Thuringia, a counterpart to the *Eneit* by translating Benoît de Sainte More's epic of the Trojan War; but Herbolt's *Lied von Troja* shows much less skill and originality than its predecessor, and is, in its enormous length—over 18,000 verses—tedious and unreadable. Hardly more merit is to be found in Albrecht von Halberstadt's version of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (ca. 1190), which was based on the Latin original and not on a French translation; but only a fragment of the original poem has come down to us.

Although the beginnings of the Court Epic are thus to be sought on the Lower Rhine, the three chief masters, Hartmann von Aue, Wolfram von Eschenbach, and Gottfried von Strassburg, were all South Germans. It was the special merit of the first of these, Hartmann von Aue, to give Germany a Court Epic on the model of the

French Arthurian epics of Chrétien de Troyes. Of Hartmann's life, as of the lives of all the poets of this time, we have only fragmentary, indirect, and uncertain knowledge. He seems to have been born about 1170, and served as "dienstman" or vassal of a lord of Aue, probably in the Ortenau on the west side of the Black Forest; he had the advantage of a scholarly education, and his life was darkened by more than one sorrow. He perhaps took part in the unfortunate Crusade of 1196-97, and he was dead before 1220. To his earlier years belong his lyrics and the *Büchlein* or *Klage*, a love epistle in the manner of the old "Soul and Body" dialogues of mediæval literature. His principal romances were written in the last decade of the twelfth and the first decade of the thirteenth century; they are, in the most probable chronological order, *Erec*, *Gregorius*, *Der arme Heinrich*, and *Iwein*.

The first and last of these are Arthurian romances, and both are based on epics by Hartmann's French master, Chrétien de Troyes. Between these two epics, of which the first was written about 1191, the second ten or fifteen years later, there is all the difference of style and composition which distinguishes the work of a beginner from that of a finished master, but in other respects they are complementary. *Erec* is a young knight of the Round Table who wins the hand of Enite, the daughter of a poor Graf, and, in the excess of his love for her, forgets his duties as a knight. Hurt by people's reproaches, Enite goes out into the world of adventure with him, and helps him to win back his good name as a knight. *Iwein* presents the converse picture. In the spirit of adventure the hero defeats and slays the possessor of a magic spring in the forest, and marries his widow; he is, however, so devoted to his profession of knighthood that he forgets his wife entirely. He breaks his vow to return to her at the end of a year, and when reminded of this vow, is so overwhelmed by remorse that he becomes bereft of his senses and lives for a time naked in the forest. Restored to health, another series of adventures await him before he is ulti-

mately reconciled to his wife. *Iwein* is the best example in German of the Arthurian romance as it was cultivated in France; it is admirably planned and proportioned, and free alike from German diffuseness and German obscurity. The Hartmann who wrote *Iwein* is the unsurpassed master of form and style in the Middle High German epic.

More personal and less objective are the two romances, which, in all probability, were composed before *Iwein*, *Gregorius*, and *Der arme Heinrich*. The first of these is a religious legend in which asceticism takes the place of the active optimism of the Arthurian epic. Like a Christian Oedipus, Gregorius finds himself the victim of a terrible fate: he is the child of a brother and sister, the husband of his mother. And to expiate his crime he has himself chained for seventeen years to a rock in the sea, where dripping water is his only nourishment; in the end he is rewarded by being proclaimed Pope by the voice of God. Monastic and ascetic also is *Der arme Heinrich*, a legend possibly associated with the house in whose service Hartmann himself stood. A certain Heinrich von Aue becomes, at the height of his prosperity, stricken with leprosy; and the physicians tell him that the only remedy is the blood of a young girl, who, of her own free will, gives her life for him. The daughter of a farmer, with whom Heinrich has taken refuge, is ready to sacrifice herself; but at the last moment, when the knife is being whetted, Heinrich repents; he calls to the physician to stay his hand; he will rather die himself. The disease disappears, and the farmer's daughter ultimately becomes Heinrich's wife. Skilfully planned and sympathetically told, *Der arme Heinrich* is one of the most charming idylls in mediæval literature.

While Hartmann's supreme merit was, without denying his own poetic individuality, to have familiarised Germany with the clear, well-proportioned art of the French master of the Arthurian romance, the two other great poets of the Court Epic, and, above all, Wolfram von Eschenbach, were more original. No European poet, indeed, before



Dante can vie with Wolfram in grandeur of imagination and depth of insight into the springs of human action; he is the profoundest Germanic poet of the Middle Ages. When he was born we do not know; but he seems to have been of about the same age as Hartmann. He may have lived until 1220. He took his name from the little Bavarian (then Frankish) town of Eschenbach, which lies not far from Ansbach, and here he was probably born. Compared with Hartmann, he was comparatively illiterate; he even tells us he could not read or write. Whether this statement is to be taken as strictly true or not, his comparative freedom from the trammels of French romance, the naturalness of his outlook on life, and his sturdy humour, show, at least, that literary traditions did not lie heavy on him. Wolfram von Eschenbach was repeatedly the guest of the great patron of Middle High German poetry, the Landgraf Hermann of Thuringia, and there is ground for believing that at least the sixth and seventh books of his epic, *Parzival*, were written, not long after 1203, in the Wartburg near Eisenach; in any case the poem was composed at the beginning of the thirteenth century.

*Parzival* is an epic of nearly 25,000 lines, divided over sixteen books; it unrolls in the leisurely fashion of chivalric romance the story of Parzival, son of Gahmuret of Anjou and Queen Herzeloyde of Valois, from his careless, idyllic childhood in the forest, where his mother brings him up in order to preserve him from the temptations of adventure, which had proved fatal to his father, to the culmination of his life, when he is crowned king of the Grail. It differs from other epic romances in being not merely a book of adventure; it is also a story of spiritual growth, the history of a soul in its journey through the trials and temptations of life; for Parzival's ultimate triumph is due to his purity and singleness of purpose, to his power of rising superior to the doubts and despairs through which he passes.

To the child of the forest the existence of the great world outside is first revealed by knights in armour, whom the boy believes to be gods, for his mother had

taught him that God was bright and shining. From these knights he learns the knowledge his mother would fain have kept from him, and he begs to be allowed to seek the court of King Arthur. Herzeloyde lets him go, but, in the hope that he may be driven back to her by the mockery of men, she dresses him in the garb of a fool. Parzival, however, does not return, and his mother dies of a broken heart. Meanwhile on his way to King Arthur he becomes, through his very innocence and ignorance of the laws of chivalry, involved in guilt; he kills a noble knight and robs a noble lady of her ring and brooch. From King Arthur's court he finds his way to the castle of an old knight, Gurnemanz of Grabarz, who receives him hospitably and gives him the wisdom of which he stands so sorely in need. Once more he goes out into the world, still pure of heart, but no longer a simpleton; and by his first deed of prowess wins the heart and hand of a beautiful queen, Kondwiramur, who becomes his wife.

Parzival's thoughts now revert to his mother in the forest, and he resolves to seek her out, ignorant of the fact that his long absence has cost her her life. Towards evening on the first day he arrives at a lake, and inquires of some fishermen where he may find a night's lodging. The most distinguished among them directs Parzival to a castle in the neighbourhood where he will himself be his host. Parzival is well received, and led into a hall where sit four hundred knights; his host, beside whom he is placed, is no other than King Anfortas, the king of the Gral. According to the interpretation of the church, the Holy Gral, a vessel of miraculous powers, was identified with the cup from which Christ drank at the Last Supper, and in which Joseph of Arimathea received His blood when He was nailed to the cross. In Wolfram's *Parzival* it has become a precious stone, which possesses marvellous powers of supplying meat and drink; those powers, however, have to be renewed once each year, on Good Friday, by a dove that descends from heaven. Parzival

is now the witness of the mystic ceremony of the Gral. He sees the bleeding spear borne through the hall, and hears the knights groaning when they see it; he observes that his host, Anfortas, suffers from a wound that will not heal, and through a half-open door he catches a glimpse of King Titurel, old and ashen pale. But all this he sees and hears in silence; no question crosses his lips as to what it all means, no word of sympathy for the sufferers.

Next morning when he wakens, he finds the company of the previous evening gone, and leaves the castle; only later does he learn that he has been in the castle of Monsalvatsch, the castle of the Gral. He returns to the court of King Arthur, where the sorceress Kundrie, the messenger of the Gral, confronts him and curses him for his lack of sympathy on the evening at Monsalvatsch. One word of sympathy from his lips would have brought relief and healing to the sufferers. Parzival is overcome by his sense of guilt; he feels dishonoured, and sets out again to seek the castle of the Gral and repair his fatal omission; and for four long years he wanders in the Valley of the Shadow, doubting, despairing, seeking, fighting, but still untarnished in heart and soul; still facing life with manly courage. Meanwhile Wolfram turns aside from his hero's adventures to relate those of Gawan, the more worldly ideal of the Arthurian knight, who serves as a kind of foil to the guileless hero.

In the ninth book we return again to Parzival, who, hopeless and despairing, is rebuked by an old knight for bearing arms on Good Friday. The knight induces Parzival to seek out a hermit in the forest, and to unburden to him his load of sin. His horse guides him to the place, where he finds Trevrizent, the brother of Anfortas and Herzeloyde, his own uncle. What Trevrizent did for him in the first part of the story, Trevrizent does now; Parzival opens his heart to the hermit, and learns from him what path he must follow if he will find again the Gral. Two great trials of valour

and strength await him before the goal is reached; he must overcome both Gawan and his own half-brother, Feirefiz. Then he returns once more to the castle of Monsalvatsch, and asks the question of sympathy which releases the sufferers from the spell. He is reunited with Kondwiramur, and himself becomes king of the Gral. So closes this epic of human suffering and of the redeeming power of sympathy, an epic which crystallises into poetry, as no other work of its time, the spiritual aspiration, the naïve beauty and emotional intensity of mediæval Christianity. In Parzival himself the worldly and the spiritual blend to form the perfect knight.

Wolfram von Eschenbach is the author of two other poems, the so-called *Titurel*, of which the leading figures, Schionatulander and Sigune, appeared episodically in the great epic; and *Willehalm*, a version of the French *Bataille d'Aliscans*. Both were written subsequently to *Parzival*. The first of these poems is composed in a strophic metre similar to that of the popular epic, and shows Wolfram's art from a new side; it is a fragmentary love-story, an idyllic episode rather than an epic romance. In *Willehalm*, on the other hand, the subject of which was suggested to Wolfram by the Landgraf of Thuringia, we find a stormier, more virile life than was depicted either in *Parzival* or *Titurel*; *Parzival* had presented a picture of the Christian hero in the ideal world of romance; *Willehalm* portrays the Christian hero as a soldier fighting for his faith. The gentle, unworldly Kondwiramur stands in similar contrast to Willehalm's noble and heroic wife Gyburg, the finest of all Wolfram's women. But, like *Parzival*, this poem is also dominated by the poet's own personality, his calm, just outlook on life and the nobility of soul which enabled him to rise superior to the strife of factions and the differences of religious faith.

The third of the great mediæval epic poets is Gottfried von Strassburg, of whose life we are even more completely in ignorance than of Hartmann's or Wolfram's; we have, however, direct evidence in an acrostic that he was the

author of the epic of *Tristan*. We can also infer that Gottfried was a learned poet, that is to say, familiar with both Latin and French, and that, unlike the others, he did not belong to the nobility; to contemporaries he is always "Meister" Gottfried, not "Herr." From internal evidence it is possible to fix the date of the poem as approximately 1210. The source of *Tristan* is, to some extent, a matter of conjecture. Chrétien de Troyes wrote an epic on the subject, which is lost, and it would be natural to assume that Gottfried had found his materials here. He expressly mentions, however, a certain "Thomas of Brittany" as his source, and a few fragments of an old French *Tristan* by a "jongleur" of this name have been discovered. These fragments are, for the most part, from a part of the poem which Gottfried did not reach, his epic being unfinished, but there is sufficient correspondence to place his indebtedness beyond question.

Tristan's father, Riwalin of Parmenia, fell in battle before his son was born, and his mother, Blancheflur, died in giving birth to him; he is brought up by the faithful marshal Rual, and astonishes everyone by his precocious powers. Carried off by Norse merchants, he is landed on the coast of Cornwall, and makes his way to the castle of Tintajuel, where King Marke holds his court. Here his foster-father finds him after a search of four years, and discloses to the king and to himself who he is. Thereupon King Marke appoints him his heir, and amidst the ceremony of the mediæval "Schwertleite," Tristan is invested with the honours of knighthood. The young hero's first business is to avenge his father's murder in Parmenia; he reconquers that country and hands it over to his foster-father's sons. He then returns to Cornwall, where he undertakes to free the land from an intolerable tribute imposed upon it by the Irish king Gurmun and his brother-in-law Morold. The matter depends on single combat with Morold. Tristan overcomes him, but receives a wound which, as his dying opponent tells him, can only be cured by his sister, the Irish queen. Morold's brother is taken back to Ireland,

drawn back to Cornwall, where more adventures await him. Again we find him united to his wife, but he has returned with a wound from a poisoned spear, and only the Isolde of Cornwall can cure him. A messenger is dispatched to fetch her, and it is arranged that if she returns with the ship, it is to bear a white sail, if not, a black one. Tristan's wife is, however, jealous and deceives him, telling him that the sail of the approaching vessel is black. He succumbs before the ship reaches the shore, and Isolde of Cornwall dies of grief at his side. The secret of the fatal potion is revealed to King Marke, and he has the lovers buried side by side in Cornish soil; a vine and rose, planted on their graves, intertwine.

Gottfried did not live to complete his epic, and, to find the end of the story after Tristan's marriage to the white-banded Isolde, we have to turn to his continuers, Ulrich von Türheim, who wrote about 1240, and Heinrich von Freiberg (ca. 1300), a much more gifted poet than Ulrich. Gottfried's *Tristan*, no less than *Iwein* and *Parzival*, is one of the masterpieces of mediæval literature; clear, pellucid, written with a mastery of language inferior to that of no other mediæval poet, *Tristan* is a romance of inexhaustible charm. So true and living do Gottfried's figures stand out against the background, so wonderfully is their passion attuned to the music of the ever-present sea, that even the modern reader is not wearied by the recurrence of endless love-adventures. No other poet of the Middle Ages understood, as Gottfried did, how to describe a great passion; none realised, as he had done, the intense earnestness of those whose lives are in its grip. Not a touch of lightness, not a gleam of frivolity, lightens the grim pessimism, in which the old Germanic virtue of unflinching loyalty succumbs before the sinister power which holds two noble souls in its grasp.

With these three poets, Hartmann, Wolfram, and Gottfried, the German Arthurian epic touches its highest point; the literature which followed, in so far at least as it restricted itself to the Arthurian stories, was little more than unoriginal and uninspired imitation. And in pro-

portion as the influence of one or other of the chief poets predominates, it is possible to group the work of their successors.

To the imitators of Hartmann—and Hartmann had the most immediate influence upon his contemporaries—belong Ulrich von Zatzikoven, a Swiss poet who wrote a *Lanzelet* about 1195, and, perhaps most gifted of all the minor poets of the age, Wirnt von Gravenberg, a Bavarian nobleman, who about 1205 wrote his *Wigalois*, an epic, the hero of which is Gawan's son. Gawan himself is the subject of a long, planless poem, *Die Krone* (i.e., "the crown of all adventures"), which a Carinthian poet, Heinrich von Türlin, wrote under Hartmann's influence about 1220 or a little earlier. Hartmann's style may still be traced in the second half of the thirteenth century, in the epics of a poet of Salzburg known as "der Pleier." But while these imitators of Hartmann have, one and all, taken over their master's way of looking at life, that dualism which presents the forces of light and darkness in even balance, not one grasped the importance of the greatest lesson he had to teach, the lesson of artistic form.

As was to be expected, the influence of Wolfram was still less conducive to style and proportion; indeed, the very originality of Wolfram deteriorated, in his successors, into a mannerism. His influence on the Court epic became more marked as the thirteenth century advanced. The chief poem of Wolfram's school is *Der jüngere Titurel*, a long romance, written about 1270 by a Bavarian, perhaps Albrecht von Scharfenberg by name, and built up on the fragments of Wolfram's *Titurel*. Of Wolfram's understanding for the spiritual side of life there is little in his successors; but something of the imaginative mysticism of Wolfram's Grail story has at least passed over into *Der jüngere Titurel*. To the group of literature associated with *Parzival* belong also two other Bavarian poems, *Der heilige Georg*, by Reinbot von Duren (ca. 1240), and *Lohengrin*, written at a still later date (between 1276 and 1290) than *Der jüngere Titurel*.

The influence of Gottfried of Strassburg spread more rapidly. In 1220 a Swiss poet, Konrad Fleck, imitated him in a love epic, *Flore und Blancheflur*, and the two continuers of *Tristan*, already mentioned, were more or less disciples of Gottfried. There was a more modern element in Gottfried's art which appealed with increasing force as time went on to the poets of the Court epic; and it is not surprising to find that his influence is paramount on the two chief poets of the later period, Rudolf von Ems and Konrad von Würzburg. The first of these was a native of Switzerland, taking his name from Ems near Chur. He has left a vast quantity of verse, which, however, partakes more of the character of chronicle than romance. Only in his early period, in poems like *Der gute Gerhart* and *Barlaam und Josaphat*, which were written not long after 1220, does Rudolf keep himself sufficiently free from religious asceticism and pedantic detail to appeal to his readers' interest from the purely poetic side; even his *Wilhelmi von Orlens*, written between 1231 and 1238, a romance of chivalry, is dry and tedious, and his *Weltchronik*, a history of the world down to the age of Solomon, is rather an encyclopædia of mediæval learning than a poem. All that such a poet could learn from Gottfried was the method of presenting his subject; the warm life, the pagan revelling in passion, which provided the atmosphere of Gottfried's *Tristan*, could mean nothing to Rudolf's dry, ascetic temperament.

A poet of a different stamp was Konrad von Würzburg, who, probably a native of Würzburg, died at Basel in 1287; he began to write not long after Rudolf von Ems' death in 1254. Konrad has left a considerable body of narrative poetry behind him, characterised by a healthy realism and told in that effective narrative style he had learned from Gottfried; but Konrad, compared with his master, fails, as all the minor Middle High German poets fail, in being unable to distinguish the essential from the unessential, the poetic from the prosaic. He began by writing religious legends, such as *Alexius*, and



poems with strongly marked religious tendencies, like *Der Welt Lohn* and *Die goldene Schmiede*, the latter an allegorical glorification of the Virgin. From these he passed to more worldly romances, such as *Kaiser Otto*, *Die Herzmäre*—the story of a knight who, dying in the East, commands that his heart be taken back to his mistress, whereupon the latter's husband has it cooked and served up to her—and Konrad's pæan in honour of friendship, *Engelhart*. In these short romances Konrad is seen at his best. The unwieldy epics of *Partenopier* (ca. 1277), a fantastic fairy romance, which shows only too plainly the decadence of the epic, and *Der trojanische Krieg*, his last work, the longest epic in Middle High German literature, are so extraordinarily diffuse and ill-constructed that it is difficult for the modern reader to extract from them even the modicum of poetry they contain.

Besides the gradual sinking of the Arthurian romance, the narrative literature of the thirteenth century shows two distinct developments, both of which were due to the demand for a more faithful presentment of life than is to be found in the great poets. One form in which this craving for reality showed itself, was the growing tendency to substitute the truth of the chronicle for the romantic fiction of chivalry; the other development tended to discountenance the knight in this era of social change and to deal with the lives and adventures of ordinary men and women. To the former phase belong, besides avowed chronicle poets like Rudolf von Ems, the writers of semi-historical romances, such as Ulrich von Eschenbach and Berthold von Holle. The second tendency was productive of more important poetical results; we owe to it a revival of the "Schwank" of the mediæval Spielmann, an example of which is the *Pfaffe Amis* of the "Stricker," a Rhenish poet of the earlier thirteenth century who passed part of his life in Austria, and also the admirable peasant romance by Wernher der Gartenaere, *Meier Helmbrecht*, which was written before the middle of the century. This story

of the discontented peasant who degenerates into a freebooter and ends his life on the gallows, is the reverse of the ideal pictures which the poets of an earlier generation had drawn; it is a forerunner, in its unflinching realism, of a large body of German narrative poetry in the next few centuries. The actual conflict of the new realism and social ideals with the world of chivalry is illustrated by the two poems, *Frauendienst* (1255) and the *Frauenbuch* (1257), written by a Styrian knight, Ulrich von Lichtenstein, who was probably born about 1200. These books, descriptions of the poet's own adventures as a knight and a lover, make a vain effort to uphold the old ideals amidst the decadence of the new age. The many lyrics which are interspersed in Ulrich's narrative give him a prominent place in the history of the Minnesang.

At the beginning of the fourteenth century the Arthurian epic was virtually dead; it had been a kind of mirror held up to chivalry, reflecting with extraordinary sensitiveness the changes to which knighthood was exposed; and as soon as the old social order passed away, its degeneration set in with rapidity. The Court epic ceased to be the bearer of a great poetic ideal, and became merely a form, and an inferior one, of the entertaining literature of its day.

## CHAPTER V.

## MINNESANG AND DIDACTIC POETRY.

As we have already seen in considering the beginnings of Middle High German poetry, the origin of the third great group of that poetry, the lyric or Minnesang, presents more difficult problems than either of the other two. But whether the German Minnesang was, like the Popular Epic, indigenous in its origins or not, it at least responded with alacrity to the stimulus which came with chivalry from the west; at a very early stage it adopted not merely the form of the French or Provençal lyric, but also its themes and even its general social ethics and conventions. At the same time, the German singer was no artificial imitator; he honestly sang of what he felt, even when he was expressing himself in stereotyped words, images, and forms. The Minnesinger was quick to realise where he could no longer follow his Provençal model and where his mental horizon no longer coincided with the latter's; the German poet took over the conventions of the French lyric, but he put at an early date his own German stamp upon them. This is particularly noticeable in the more spiritual and mystic meaning which was given to the word "Minne," as compared with the personal and concrete "amour" of the French poets. Thus, when due allowance is made for the peculiar conditions of mediæval poetry—the existence of binding traditions affecting the whole body of chivalric literature, Romance as well as Germanic—it is possible to understand how the Minnesang could be dependent on forms originally foreign,

and at the same time be the vehicle of a national lyric sentiment.

In the early beginnings of the Minnesang, which have already been traced, a purely German lyric, or what appears to be such, may be found beside the conventional lyric of chivalry; but at a comparatively early date the fusion of the two was complete. The first master of the epic, Heinrich von Veldeke, was at the same time the initiator of this new phase in the development of the lyric; in more than fifty lyric strophes, which he has left us, he has succeeded in combining the French conventions with the natural sentiment of the light-hearted Rhineland. From the Rhine, too, came Friedrich von Hausen, one of Barbarossa's crusaders, who died in 1190 in battle with the Turk. The influence of the Provençal lyric is strong on Friedrich's poetry, but one obtains, notwithstanding, a clear idea from his songs of the personality of this manly, if somewhat melancholy, soldier-poet. More gifted and original was the Thuringian, Heinrich von Morungen, who represents a further stage in the adaptation of the French lyric to German needs; in his language, and especially in his lighter and gayer mood, he widened the range of expression of the German Minnesang. Hartmann von Aue sought in his lyrics as in his narrative poetry a remedy for the spiritual dissension which he felt so keenly; all the poems by him that have been preserved are religious in tone, and were evidently written in those years of doubt and despair, which have also left their traces on his epics. Less easily did Wolfram's rugged genius adapt itself to the narrow confines of the lyric; what we possess of his is more the description of a dramatic situation than the subjective reflex of the poet's own emotional experience. Lastly, two or three lyrics have come down to us under Gottfried's name, but it is almost certain that they are not his.

The master of the German Minnesang, and one of the greatest of all lyric poets, is Walther von der Vogelweide, who lived from about 1170 to about 1228. The exact date of his birth and where he was born are unknown.

Many places have striven for the honour of being Walther's birthplace, but all that can be said is that he was most probably a native of the Austrian Tirol. He was of noble family—the title “Herr” implies this—but so poor that he was obliged to win his bread by his talents as a “*fahrender Sänger*.”

The first definite knowledge we have of Walther is that he spent his early years at the court of Duke Leopold V. in Vienna, and that he here attracted the attention of Reinmar von Hagenau, or Reinmar der Alte, an Alsatian poet who had made Vienna his home. Reinmar has left a large number of lyrics, but these rarely rise above the conventional forms of the *Minnesang*; his theme is almost invariably unrequited love, and the tone of his poetry is monotonously elegiac. By him, however, Walther was initiated into the art of poetry, and when Reinmar died, about 1210, Walther wrote a noble panegyric of him. Walther von der Vogelweide's early lyrics are influenced by Reinmar; but his tone is lighter, more youthful and exuberant; he learned the art of Reinmar's poetry without being unduly affected by its mood. On the whole, however, Walther in this early period has not advanced much beyond the artificial conventions of his time. He left Vienna in 1198 and, for the next ten or twelve years, wandered from castle to castle as a “*Fahrender*.” He was, no doubt, everywhere a welcome and honoured guest, and was often entertained by his noble patrons for weeks at a time. In this, the second period of Walther's life, he is the unapproached master of the *Minnesang*, as a form of court poetry. Not all the poems he sang were based on personal feelings or experience; at the same time, he doubtless met by the way with love-adventures of more or less seriousness which provided materials for his verse.

In the year 1197, the Emperor Heinrich VI. died unexpectedly at Messina, and the question of his successor threw the whole political life of the Roman Empire into confusion. Walther von der Vogelweide became a strong partisan of Duke Philip, the Swabian pretender to the

imperial throne. Thus, under the stress of circumstances, Walther became a political poet, and, as far as his art was concerned, an innovator. He opened up a field for the courtly Minnesang, which had hitherto been only considered suitable for the lower type of Spielmann; he raised the old "Spruch" to the level of national and patriotic song, and widened the whole scope of mediæval lyric poetry. The history of those stormy years in German history may be followed step by step in Walther's "Spruchdichtung"; that is to say, the gradual rise of Philip's fortunes, until at the height of his prosperity, in 1208, he was murdered by Otto of Wittelsbach. Walther seems only to have followed Philip with interest as long as he had adversity to fight against, and we do not know how the tragic close of the Duke's career affected the poet. In 1212, however, Walther again entered the lists as a political singer; the Pope's antagonism to the new emperor, Otto IV., at once induced him to take the latter's part. It was not, however, until the young Friedrich II., the next Staufen emperor, succeeded to the throne, that Walther reaped any benefit from his loyalty to the reigning dynasty; Friedrich gave him a small estate and enabled him to pass his last days free from care. Once more, in 1227, Walther defended his emperor against the interference of the Pope, and warmly advocated the crusade of 1228. Whether Walther himself accompanied Friedrich on this crusade or not is doubtful; from 1228 on his life is a blank to us. A tradition tells that he passed his last days in Würzburg and lies buried there, but even the year of his death is unknown. It was probably not later than 1230.

The last period of Walther's life was at the same time that of his greatest unpolitical lyric, his finest love-songs. Just as he had, as "Spruchdichter," passed beyond the boundaries of the conventional Minnesang, so here, too, he left its prescribed rules behind him; the conventions of the "Minnedienst" have ceased to be any longer even a scaffolding for his art. He now treats of themes which the courtly singer of the old school would have scorned;

and just these songs of "niedere Minne"—songs like "Unter den linden," one of the most perfect gems of mediæval German poetry—are unsurpassed in the lyric poetry of the Middle Ages. Thus in every field of his art, Walther broke new ground; the supreme merit belongs to him of having transformed the aristocratic Minnesang into the national lyric of his people. His personal outlook in the world was not optimistic, as it could hardly have been in one who was exposed to the buffets of so stormy an age. He looked backwards rather than forwards, and as he grew older the shadows on his life deepened. To his later years we owe the splendid poetic melancholy of his elegy: "Owê war sint verswunden alliu mîniu jâr!"

Perhaps the greatest tribute of all to Walther's genius is that the later development of the German lyric, down into the century of the Reformation, stands under his influence; he is the master to whom the later singers, Meistersingers as well as Minnesingers, look up as to an infallible lawgiver. There were poets—of whom the Swabian Hiltbold von Schwangau may be taken as representative—who clung conservatively to the older conventions of the courtly Minnesang, and who, despite the inevitable influence of Walther, preferred to hark back to the latter's predecessors for their models; but the majority of Walther's imitators were content to imitate him slavishly. Of the latter, Ulrich von Singenberg of St Gall and Leuthold von Säben were not ungifted poets, although they had little understanding for the really vital elements in Walther's poetry.

To have had this understanding was the conspicuous merit of the greatest of Walther's contemporaries and successors, Neidhart von Reuenthal, who lived from about 1180 to 1250. Neidhart seized upon the popular side of Walther's poetry; he developed the lyric of "niedere Minne" and created what has been described as "höfische Dorfpoesie," village poetry under court influence. This poetry, no less than Walther's, was intended for court circles; but by introducing, in a manner that almost

suggests a comparison with Heine, ironical, piquant, and even grotesque elements, Neidhart provided a new zest for the jaded palates of his audience. In verses attuned to the season, the sprightly, sharp-tongued poet sings of the peasants on whom he looks down as upon a heavy-witted race. From one point of view, all this is a descent from the noble Minnesang of Walther and his predecessors; there is a strain of coarseness in Neidhart's lyric which necessarily appealed to a lower taste. But it was an inevitable stage through which the lyric had to pass. The great outburst of popular song in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries would not have been what it was, had poets like Neidhart von Reuenthal not thus directed the stream of the courtly Minnesang into popular channels.

Few of the Minnesinger of the later half of the thirteenth century escaped the influence of Neidhart von Reuenthal. In most of them, as in Burkhart von Hohenfels, Ulrich von Winterstetten, and Gottfried von Neifen, we find the older court lyric side by side with the peasant lyric. But in their natural temperament and their outlook upon life the poets of this period were obviously more in sympathy with Neidhart than with Walther. "Der Tannhäuser," for example, was a rough, witty Spielmann, who had little sympathy with the solemn formalities of the old "Minnedienst"; he wrote under French influence, the models most congenial to his taste being the French "pastourels," a form of poetry which is not unsimilar to Neidhart's lyric. In the verses of "Steinmar"—probably Berthold Steinmar von Klingenuau—the new lyric of "niedere Minne" has been reduced almost to a parody of the higher Minnesang. By the close of the thirteenth century the Minnesang had become a distant tradition, and when attempts were made to revive it, as, for example, by the Zürich citizen, Johannes Hadlaub, it made the impression of being an artificial and insincere cult.

The stimulating qualities of Walther's songs of "niedere Minne" are also to be found in his "Spruchdichtung," his poetic comments on the political and social questions



of the day. As Neidhart developed the lower lyric, so Reinmar von Zweter, a poet of the Rhineland, who passed part, at least, of his life in Austria, was Walther's immediate successor as a "Spruchdichter." Reinmar's satire is mild and timid, and even his political poetry has not the vigour of his master's; his verses are monotonous and lacking in variety; but we find in them, nevertheless, the germs of that satiric and didactic "Spruchdichtung" which was to become so powerful a weapon in the hands of the social reformers of the Reformation age. From now on, the "Spruch" remains a constant quantity in German poetry; its scope was widened to admit the most outspoken satire on the one side, and on the other to include—as in the verses of poets like the "Marnier," a Swabian who lived till about 1270—the recondite learning of the time. This, rather than the pure lyric, was the form of poetry in which the later Meistersinger schools delighted to exercise their art.

The transition from purely imaginative poetry to a didactic and satiric literature was a characteristic sign of the times in the thirteenth century; it was intimately connected with the social changes of the age, the gradual rise in importance of the burgher. The beginnings of didacticism in Middle High German poetry may, however, be traced back to the best years of the century, and even—as in the case of the *Tugendlehre* of Wernher von Elmendorf, and the long popular *Disticha Catonis*—beyond it. A typical moral text-book of the early thirteenth century was *Der Winsbeke*, by a Bavarian Herr von Windesbach; it contains, in the form of instruction given by a father to his son, the code of knightly virtue in an age when the Arthurian epic held the mirror up to chivalry. As a poem it has small merit, and still less has a later companion poem *Die Winsbekin*, the instruction of a mother to her daughter. A long step forward in the direction of a purely didactic literature is to be seen in *Der welsche Gast*, a poem of some 15,000 verses, written about 1215 by an Italian churchman, Thomasin von Zirclære, and sent as a "guest"

to German lands. Thomasin destroys the poetic halo that had surrounded chivalry, and keeps before him religious and moral aims. But he remains the aristocrat, to whom the burgher is of small importance; he still looks up to the Arthurian epics as moral guides for the youth of the time. In religious matters he insists on the Pope's supremacy in the Holy Roman Empire, and will admit of no infringement of the letter of the catholic faith.

Still more democratically didactic is a collection of epigrammatic "Sprüche" entitled *Bescheidenheit* ("worldly wisdom"), begun perhaps as early as *Der welsche Gast*, but not finished until some fifteen years later. The author, who calls himself "Freidank," was no doubt a wandering Spielmann, but except the fact that he took part in the crusade of 1229, we know nothing of him. *Bescheidenheit* is a book of the people and for the people. The existence of knighthood and the ideas of chivalry are by no means ignored, especially in the poet's discussion of love; but they have ceased to be more than an ideal in the background. His point of view is that of the common man, whose trusting piety did not blind him to the shortcomings of the church, whose implicit faith in Rome did not bring with it the belief that the Pope should also be the head of the state and dictate to a German emperor. What Freidank gives us is not direct satire, but it is a preparation for the satire of the coming centuries. Light is thrown on the social conditions at the close of the thirteenth century by a collection of satirical poetry written in Lower Austria and ascribed to a Spielmann, Seifried Helbling; a dialogue of questions and answers, a form familiar in the late Latin literature of this class, is here made the vehicle of a trenchant criticism of the passing social order. Didactic in a more learned way is another poem of this period, *Der Renner* (so called because it was to "run" through the world, to be a "cursor mundi"), by Hugo von Trimberg, a schoolmaster of Teuerstadt, a village on the outskirts of Bamberg. Hugo von Trimberg's matter-of-fact spirit has little

patience with the "lies" set forth in the epics of chivalry, but he sees no falseness in the elaborate allegory in which he himself inveighs against the sinful life. But *Der Renner* has little plan or form; its author little calling for poetry. He pleases best when he borrows most freely from his predecessor and master, Freidank.

Middle High German literature is almost exclusively a literature in verse; prose, at least as a literary vehicle, is non-existent, and to find specimens of it at all we have to turn mainly to sermons and law-books. To the former category belong the German tracts of David of Augsburg, who died in 1271, a preacher whose mysticism foreshadowed coming developments in German religious thought. His German sermons are unfortunately lost. But from his contemporary, Berthold von Regensburg, we possess many German sermons. Berthold lived from about 1220 to 1272, wandered all over Germany, and was unquestionably the greatest popular preacher of the German Middle Ages. His language has all the qualities of a good popular prose; it is direct, dramatic, sincere, and often illumined by striking imagery. Indeed, it is difficult to believe that so excellent a prose style had not been preceded by a long evolution of prose literature. Of less literary value is the prose of the law-books of the age. The model for all the German legal codes was the famous *Sachsenspiegel*, put together in Low German about 1225 by Eike von Repgowe, a knight of Anhalt; and the most important imitation of it was the South German *Schwabenspiegel*, which, in its oldest form, dates from about 1260. Of more general interest than these is the so-called *Lucidarius*, a kind of encyclopædia in the form of question and answer which was compiled between 1190 and 1195, possibly at the direct instigation of Heinrich the Lion.

Looking back on the Middle High German literature which we have just passed in review, it might be said that its most conspicuous characteristic is extreme simplicity; it is practically only a literature in verse, and it falls into great clearly marked groups, distinguished either by the

rank and culture of the individual poets, or by the themes they chose for their poetry. National epic and Court epic exist side by side with little overlapping, and such as there is, is not due to any unclearness of definition. In the same way the lyric, or Minnesang, developed on bold and simple lines, without the confusion of forms which renders a survey of any other period of German lyric poetry so difficult. Least sharply defined is the group of literature which has been discussed in the latter part of the present chapter, satire and didactic poetry; but these may be regarded as merely the prelude to a vast literature which belongs essentially to the following age.

## CHAPTER VI.

THE TRANSITION FROM MEDIÆVAL TO MODERN  
LITERATURE.

ABSENCE of continuity is a distinguishing feature of Germany's literary as well as her political history; she would appear to cling with less tenacity to her poetic traditions than Italy, or France, or England, and consequently her periods of transition are usually at the same time periods of destruction and reconstruction, of decay and rebirth. In the literature of Italy, Dante, Ariosto, Tasso, were the representatives of a transition from mediævalism to modern times; in France, the ideas of the Middle Ages merged, like dissolving views, into the aspirations of the Renaissance, and in England a poet like Chaucer is at the same time a spokesman of mediævalism and the "father of modern poetry." In German literature, on the other hand, there is no Chaucer, no bridge leading from the Middle Ages to modern times. The decay, which had already set in in the fourteenth century, proceeded apace in the fifteenth; and the fabric of mediæval literature had almost to be razed to the ground before the foundations of a modern literature could be laid.

The subversive character of this transition is partly explained by the social and political changes to which the German people were in a peculiar degree exposed. The close of the crusades hastened the decay of chivalry; the invention of gunpowder made the knight of the old stamp superfluous, for the issue of battles depended under the new conditions more on the masses of foot-soldiers

than on the valour of individuals. As the old aristocracy disappeared, the middle classes rose in importance; commerce became a factor of greater weight than it had ever been before, and the focus of power in the state was removed from the castle to the town. So radical a change in the social order brought about a complete shifting in the literary centre of gravity; the polite aristocratic literature of the Middle Ages gave place to a crude and naïve middle-class literature. The finer graces of chivalry had no counterpart in the towns, where life was honest and straightforward, but without polish or culture; the sense of beauty and the feeling for rhythm, which had been laboriously attained by the higher classes at the opening of the twelfth century, disappeared as completely as if they had never existed. Literature became once more formless and unmusical; it had, as it were, to go back to the beginnings again. It is true, the people still loved the old stories of knightly prowess, just as when, in earlier days, they sat at the feet of the noble singer; but now that they had themselves become the tellers of these stories, the narrative alone remained; unimaginative simplicity, a jingling doggerel or lumbering prose, not rarely a coarse humour, took the place of the refined art of the past. In place of the unworldly ideals of the knight, we now find that utilitarian didacticism which seems inseparable from the middle-class mind in all times.

Almost as late as the Reformation, however, attempts were made to keep the traditions of mediæval romance alive; Wolfram's *Parzival* was, between 1331 and 1336, extended by two Alsations, Claus Wisse and Philipp Colin; the stories of the Trojan War, of Alexander the Great, and Charles the Great, were told again in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. But, as time went on, the attempts to revive the old epic, such as Ulrich von Fûetrer's *Buch der Abenteuer*, written at the close of the latter century, showed how impossible it was to bring the Arthurian ideals into harmony with the sober life of the German burgher. The Emperor Maximilian I. (1459-

1519), the "last of the knights," was at the same time the last great patron and cultivator of mediæval literature. Two romances associated with his name, *Der Weisskönig* (1512) and *Teuerdank* (printed 1517), have almost all the defects of the decadent epic. Chivalrous adventure is in the latter mingled with historical fact or extravagant allegory; the spacious idealism of the old time is ousted by irrelevant moralisings on right and wrong, or by ludicrously trivial realism; and the whole set forth in clumsy, unpoetic verses, which, however, were not composed by the emperor himself, but by his scribe, Melchior Pfintzing of Nürnberg. Prose was more to the taste of the age than verse, and we find, accordingly, the stories of chivalry and the national epics told again and again in this medium; many of them, indeed, became favourite "Volksbücher" for generations to come. But even where verse was employed, the technique of Middle High German poetry had become a lost art, and the poets of the age recast the national epics in so-called "Knittelverse," as in the *Dresdener Heldenbuch* (1472) and the *Lied vom hürnen Seifried*.

For a time it seemed as if the loss of chivalry might be compensated for in the poetry of this age by the poetic mysticism and allegory which filtered into European literature from theological speculation; allegories, such as that of the chess figures, were as popular in Germany as elsewhere; and Swabia gave some promise of a revival of her old poetic prestige with an allegorical literature that might have taken its place beside the *Roman de la Rose*. But neither *Der Minne Lehre* by Heinzelein of Constance at the close of the thirteenth century, nor Hermann von Sachsenheim's *Des Spiegels Abenteuer* and *Die Möhrin* in the fifteenth century, were followed by the hoped-for poetic renaissance. The best poem of this class was, perhaps, *Die Jagd*, by Hadamar von Laber, a Bavarian nobleman of the early fourteenth century.

The taste of the middle classes ran in the direction neither of chivalrous virtues nor poetic allegories; the comic parody of the epic, with grotesquely realistic scenes

of everyday life, such as Heinrich Wittenweiler's *Ring*, from the beginning of the fifteenth century, was more to their taste. The short, comic anecdote, however, enjoyed chief favour. Figures like the Pfaffe Amis, Markolf, Neidhart Fuchs, round whom the comic stories of the earlier of these centuries collected, were still essentially mediæval; but in Tyl Eulenspiegel arose a more modern rogue, an incarnation of the coarse mischief, the sly practical joking, of the Reformation age. Although the oldest collection of Eulenspiegel's adventures dates from the later fifteenth century, no earlier version is extant than that which was published at Strassburg in 1515. Throughout the sixteenth century volume after volume of such merry adventures and comic anecdotes were issued from the German printing-presses. They embrace every form of "Schwank," from the coarse popular witticisms of the Austrian *Pfaffe von Kalenberg* (ca. 1475), its continuation, the *Histori Peter Lewen* (ca. 1550), and *Eulenspiegel*, to the Italian and oriental collections which found their way to Germany in the train of the humanists, and semi-religious and moralising collections, such as *Schimpf und Ernst* (1552) by the Franciscan monk, Johannes Pauli. Apart from this vast anecdotal literature, we find a more legitimate descendant of the mediæval "Spruchdichtung" in the verses of the so-called "Reimsprecher" of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, who had skill in throwing off extempore verses in celebration of public events or in honour of noble patrons, or, as in the case of the special group known as "Wappendichter," writing poetry descriptive of the family arms. Here may be mentioned Peter Suchenwirth, an Austrian of the later fourteenth century, and two Nürnberg poets, Hans Rosenplüt and Hans Folz, who flourished respectively about the middle of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth centuries.

Another mediæval form of literature appealed with redoubled force to this new age of middle-class supremacy, the beast fable. The fable of Æsop had been revived at the beginning of our period by Ulrich Boner, whose *Edelstein* (ca. 1349), a collection of fables on the Latin model,



was one of the first German books to be printed; and in the sixteenth century Burkard Waldis (ca. 1490-1557) in his *Esopus* (1548), and Erasmus Alberus (1500-53) in his *Buch von der Tugend und Weisheit* (1550), discovered the possibilities of the *Æsopian* fable as a vehicle for religious polemics. But just as the “Schwank” literature of this age is overshadowed by the figure of Tyl Eulenspiegel, so the beast fable is overshadowed by the most famous work that the Low German peoples have produced, the romance of *Reinke de Vos*. In a quite special sense this is a product and possession of the Low Germans; the *Reinaert de Vos*, which a certain Willem made about the middle of the thirteenth century, was Flemish; so, too, was another version written about 1375; and that of Hinrik van Alkmar, written in the fifteenth century, now unfortunately lost, was Low German. The edition we know is a Low Saxon translation of the last-mentioned version; it was printed at Lübeck in 1498. From a simple allegory in which King Lion holds his court and the rascally fox is condemned for his misdeeds but escapes punishment by his superior cunning, the story grew into an elaborate satire on human nature, a legitimate precursor of the picaresque novels of the seventeenth century. Reinke the Fox is in disgrace; every animal has some accusation to bring against him, and Brun the bear is despatched by King Lion to Malepertus, to summon Reinke before the court. But Brun is outwitted by the Fox’s cunning; so, too, is Hintze the cat. At last, Grimbart the badger succeeds in bringing the culprit to justice. He is condemned to die, but escapes on promising to disclose to the king where he will find hidden treasure. Meanwhile Reinkè proposes to make a pilgrimage to Rome to atone for his sins. Lampe the hare and Bellin the ram accompany him, but both are duped, Lampe being, indeed, served up for the supper of Reinke and his family. This brings us to the end of the first book; the remaining three books are much less interesting and much more obviously didactic; they are clearly later excrescences on the original story.

Didactic and satiric as *Reinke de Vos* was, the militant antipathies of the age demanded a more direct form of satire for their expression, and, four years earlier, there had appeared the most famous German satire of its day, Sebastian Brant's *Narrenschiff* (1494), the prototype of Barclay's *Ship of Fools*. Sebastian Brant (1457-1521), who was born and died in Strassburg, was a humanist and a scholar; he recognised as clearly as any of his contemporaries the depravity of the time and the abuses of the religious life. But he had little faith in any nostrums of reform; his only hope for Germany's regeneration was in a return to the golden age of mediæval catholicism. Thus his outlook was essentially negative; he was an iconoclast rather than the builder up of a new faith, and, in spite of himself, a forerunner of the Reformation. His *Narrenschiff* is a collection of short, vigorous satires, written in blunt rhymed verse, and occasionally with an ostentatious show of learning. From fools of crime and arrogance to rioters and spendthrifts, from meddlers and busybodies to the fools that cling with perverse self-confidence to their own ignorance, Brant marshals before us every type of folly that the age had to show; and all of them he assembles in a ship which is bound for the fools' paradise, "Narragonien." The idea of the ship, however, which is merely the framework for a collection of disconnected satires, is soon lost sight of.

The great movement of this age, the passing of the poetry of knighthood and the birth of a literature of the people, is to be seen most clearly of all in the history of the German lyric. Signs of degeneration in the courtly Minnesang are to be traced, as we have seen, early in the thirteenth century; and with every new generation of poets the bucolic lyric of Neidhart gained on the aristocratic art of the nobility. As late as the beginning of the fifteenth century there were, however, still poets bent on maintaining the old traditions. Hugo von Montfort (1357-1423), and Oswald von Wolkenstein (ca. 1367-1445), both natives of that first stronghold of the German Minnesang, the moun-

tainous land that lies to the east of Lake Constance, were Minnesingers of the old type; but their songs are either echoes of the past, tinged with melancholy, or excel in that technical cleverness and ingenuity of metrical construction, which was ultimately to destroy the sincerity of the lyric. Thus, imperceptibly, the aristocratic Minnesang became merged in the democratic Meistergesang, a form of poetry which was more concerned with technical "correctness" than with truth of sentiment.

To no movement in German poetry is the word "school" more applicable than to the "Meistersingers." The "Meistergesang" was an artificial affair of laws and rules, and could only be learned in schools. The Minnesingers had been content to express their lyric emotion directly and simply; the art of their successors lay in the invention of complicated strophic forms, the ingenious arrangement of words, and the introduction of pedantic and often incongruous imagery. Singing contests between rival poets were the chief events in the Meistersinger schools. Such contests, however, to judge from a poem of the end of the thirteenth century, the so-called *Wartburgkrieg*, which describes a contest of this kind between the chief Minnesingers assembled at the court of the Landgraf Hermann of Thuringia, would appear to go back to mediæval times. In the sixteenth century the aspirant to honours in the Meistersinger schools had first to place himself as "Schüler" under the tuition of a "Meister," who taught him the elaborate code of laws inscribed in the "Tabulatur." This learned, the scholar then became, according to the Nürnberg regulations, a "Schulfreund." The next acquirement was to be able to sing at least four acknowledged "tones" or melodies, which entitled the "Schulfreund" to advance to the rank of "Singer." And from "Singer" he proceeded to "Dichter," and from "Dichter," on the invention of a new and original "tone," to "Meister."

Needless to say, such a reduction of the art of poetry

to an artificial exercise of mental ingenuity was not favourable to the growth of poetic genius. The Meistersinger schools bore witness to an awakening interest in poetry on the part of the "Bürger" of the German towns, and they provided the soil from which sprang later developments, especially the drama; but that was all. They produced neither real poetry nor real poets. A number of the later Minnesingers, such as the poet known as the Marner, and Heinrich von Mügeln, stand on the borderland between Minnesang and Meistergesang, while Heinrich von Meissen, usually called "Frauenlob," who flourished about the end of the thirteenth and beginning of the fourteenth century, may be regarded as the first prominent Meistersinger. His verse is typical for the whole school. Obscure imagery and scholastic mysticism, far-fetched symbolism and ingenuity of strophic form, are more conspicuous than poetic spontaneity. He is at his best when he sings the praise of domestic virtues and the well-ordered life. His name may have arisen from the fact that his best-known poem is in honour of the Virgin; there is also a legend that he was borne to his grave in the cathedral of Mainz by women. In the fifteenth century the North Bavarian, Muskatblut, and Michael Beheim (1416-ca. 1480), widened to a certain extent the range of the Meistergesang, the former by introducing religious themes, the latter by making it the vehicle of his experiences as a widely-travelled adventurer; yet when, in the sixteenth century, Hans Folz and his greater pupil, Hans Sachs, made Nürnberg the last great centre of the Meistersingers' art, this form of poetry was not essentially different from what it had been in the time of Frauenlob.

Meanwhile the irrepressible lyric feeling of the German people in these centuries of intellectual awakening found another outlet; between 1350 and 1550, when artificial rules were gradually reducing the Meistergesang to a mechanical exercise, the German Volkslied rose to heights it had never reached before and was not to reach again. In these centuries, as in the seventeenth, and, in fact,

in all transitional periods of German literature, the lyric is the most constant element, the natural connecting link between even the most sharply marked-off periods. The national sagas of Ermanarich and Hildebrand were told again now in ballad form, and poets of the thirteenth century, such as Tannhäuser and "der edle Möringer," became heroes of popular poetry; the story of Siegfried was, as we have seen, recast in a long epic ballad. The historical ballad, which is very sparingly represented in the thirteenth century, and was practically a creation of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, is the successor to the "Sprüche" and narrative poems of the mediæval Spielmann. The Swiss, in particular, celebrated in long semi-epic ballads their struggle against Charles the Bold, and the *Lied von der Sempacher Schlacht* and the *Lied von der Schlacht bei Näfels* are representative historical ballads of the earlier period. This art of throwing the great events of the day into easy and attractive verse soon spread to North Germany, and by the time of the Reformation the ballad, one might say, had become the recognised newspaper of the time.

It is less easy to point to the mediæval analogue of the popular love-poetry of this time. The naïve delight in the coming of spring and the interest with which the unnamed popular poets follow the conflict between light and darkness, summer and winter, attuning these phenomena to their own joys and sorrows, seem to take us back to the very beginnings of the mediæval lyric; but the artless, natural tone of these Volkslieder is quite unhampered by rules, and had been uninfluenced by the later development of the Minnesang. We might say, perhaps, that these songs represent a form of lyric expression which had never died out, and had, all through the Middle Ages, been handed down by a merely oral tradition; the love-song of the fourteenth century was no more a new invention than the historical ballad. This is further borne out by the close connection which obviously exists between the drinking songs and social songs, the light-hearted songs of student and "landsknecht," of this age, and the

songs of the wandering scholars or Goliards that have come down to us from the earlier time.

In turn the Volkslied reacted on the religious Lied or hymn; and a new religious poetry arose in which the Latin hymns of the Church were translated into popular language, and often altered beyond all recognition. A monk of Salzburg, Hermann or Johannes, had in the fourteenth century popularised the Church poetry in this way. The Volkslieder were also employed for religious purposes by making them appear as allegories of the spiritual life, and even by actually parodying them. Heinrich von Laufenberg, a monk of Freiburg, who died in 1460, was the author of allegorical parodies of this kind.

Dramatic literature made least satisfactory progress in the transition period, the increasing elaboration of the church drama being, if anything, detrimental to its true development. The beginnings of a more secular drama are, however, to be traced in the Low German play of *Theophilus*, which goes back to the fourteenth century, and in the *Spiel von Frau Jutta*, written in 1480 by Theodor Schernberg, a priest of Mühlhausen. Both works are forerunners of the Reformation *Faust*: both represent the tragedy of man's temptation by the evil powers. *Theophilus* sells his soul to the devil for worldly distinction; "Frau Jutta of England" is tempted by the devil to pass herself off as a man; she ultimately becomes Pope, and only escapes perdition by taking upon herself the shame of the world.

## CHAPTER VII.

## HUMANISM AND THE REFORMATION.

THE preparation for the Protestant Reformation was twofold, and may be summed up in the words mysticism and humanism. At the close of the thirteenth and beginning of the fourteenth centuries German religious life was again merged, as it had been three centuries before, in a wave of religious fervour which now took the form of mysticism. Meister Eckhart (ca. 1260-1327), the first and the greatest of the German mystics, preached the oneness of the soul with God, and gave German mysticism once and for all its guiding principles and ideas. Eckhart was followed by the fervid, poetic Swiss mystic, Heinrich Seuse (1295-1366), and the manly Alsatian preacher, Johannes Tauler (ca. 1300-61). To the demand which these men made for a purely personal faith, an intimate communion of the soul with God, we owe the first complete German Bible, a translation of the Vulgate, which was published at Strassburg in 1466. What Tauler was to the fourteenth century, another Alsatian, Johann Geiler of Kaisersberg (1445-1510), was to the fifteenth; he, too, was a mystic, but a mystic who had studied in the school of the humanists. He accepted the tenets of mysticism, but he interpreted them in an essentially practical way; he demanded the abolition of abuses within the church as well as a deepening of the spiritual life of the individual. And, like his friend Brant, he had recourse to that favourite weapon of the humanists, satire.

Humanism, the other factor of the new movement, takes

its beginning, as far as Germany was concerned, from the founding of the University of Prague in 1348. It first made itself felt in literature by introducing into Germany the fruits of the Italian Renaissance; Enea Silvio, Poggio, Petrarch, Boccaccio, were translated; the classics appeared in German, notably Plautus and Terence; the literary horizon of northern Europe was rapidly widened. But the original literature of the German humanists remained Latin in language and spirit; and the fact that many of them, such as Jakob Wimpfeling (1450-1528), interested themselves in the history of their native land, atoned only in a very small degree for the un-German character of their books and ideas. One may even trace back to the contempt of the early German humanists for their mother-tongue that prejudice in favour of Latin, and even French, which did not die out in Germany until late in the eighteenth century.

But, whether Latin or German, humanism was the great destructive force which shook the catholic world to its foundations, and prepared the way for Luther. On the threshold of the Reformation stand two humanists, Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam (1467-1536) and Johannes Reuchlin of Pforzheim (1455-1522), who fought with every weapon at their command against the retrograde traditions of the mediæval church. The first of these, author of the world-famous books, the *Enchiridion militis christiani* ("Manual of the Christian Soldier," 1509), and the *Moriæ Encomium* ("Praise of Folly," 1509), laid, with his edition of the Greek Testament, the basis for a direct knowledge of the Bible; and Reuchlin became involved in one of the bitterest of pre-Reformation conflicts by the publication of a Hebrew Grammar. The humanists warmly espoused Reuchlin's cause; in 1514 he was able to publish their testimony to him in the form of *Epistolæ clarorum virorum*; and in the following years, 1515-17, appeared what was ostensibly a retort to these letters, the *Epistolæ obscurorum virorum*. At first the church party was gratified by this vindication of their standpoint, but it soon became obvious



that these letters were really an ingenious and, by its very insidiousness, powerful satire on Reuchlin's opponents. The authorship of the letters is still uncertain, Johannes Jäger (Crotus Rubianus) of Dornheim being usually mentioned as having had the chief share in them; but, whoever may have written them, the *Epistolæ obscurorum virorum* were an effective prelude to the Reformation.

Like all great movements, the Reformation was ultimately the achievement of a single mind, which synthesised and gave expression to the vague aspirations of the age. The two streams of mysticism and humanism converged and united in Martin Luther. Born at Eisleben in Thuringia on November 10, 1483, Luther had in his youth come under both influences, and in 1512, after a journey to Rome, he was made Doctor of Theology in Wittenberg; only five years later, on October 31, 1517, he nailed on the door of the Schlosskirche of that town his ninety-five *Thesen wider den Ablass*. The humanists had long inveighed against the abuse of indulgences, but Luther was the first to make it a vital question of the maintenance of the Christian church. And once a beginning was made, the principles of the protestant Reformation took miraculously rapid shape in Luther's mind. In less than three years, in 1520, he gave Germany the three great documents of protestantism, *An den Christlichen Adel deutscher Nation*, *De captivitate Babylonica ecclesiæ* (in Latin), and *Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen*. The Bible, and the Bible alone, he demanded, must be the law to every Christian; supremacy in German lands must lie with the German Emperor and not with the Pope; above all, the church must be swept clean of its hypocrisies and abuses. He will have no more vows and no monastic prisons; no more festivals for saints, no pious pilgrimages; the inquisition must be abolished. He also demanded the emancipation of the schools from the fetters of mediæval scholasticism, and made spacious plans for the reform of German education.

In the castle of the Wartburg, where Luther was concealed, a willing prisoner, until the storms evoked by his

actions had subsided a little, he began his translation of the Bible; the New Testament appeared in 1522, the whole Bible in 1534. In 1522 he returned to Wittenberg, and in 1525 married a former nun, Katharina von Bora. His death took place in 1546 during a visit to his native town.

Like the English Bible, Luther's Bible is in the best sense a literary monument; it is a "Volksbuch," written in the pithy, vivid language of the German people, and represents, better than any other book of its age, the triumph of the new middle-class literature over the aristocratic poetry of the Middle High German period. In respect of language it was no less important; for Luther was careful to choose for the medium of his translation a dialect—that of Meissen and the Saxon official language—which should be comprehensible to the greatest possible numbers of the nation, and in this way took the first and greatest step towards the literary unification of Germany.

Luther not only gave Germany her Bible, but also her hymn-book; his *Geistliche Lieder*, of which the first collection appeared in 1524, form the basis of the protestant hymnal. As in his Bible he had taken the language of "the common German man" as his model, so here he turns to the German Volkslied. Simplicity and pious earnestness, above all, the avoidance of dogmatism and of that over-subtlety which crept into German religious poetry later, are the characteristics of his hymns. The best idea of Luther's personality is to be obtained from his *Tischreden*, which were first collected in 1566; these give an interesting glimpse into the mind of the reformer, and reveal a strange combination of childlike simplicity and dogged, unbending will which shrank before nothing. His unreadiness to enter into any compromise, even with those who wished him and his cause well, may often seem to us tactless; but we have to admit that it was just this ruthless determination of purpose and callous unreasonableness that en-

tributes to its justification and necessity. The impression which Murner makes on us is that of an absolutely negative nature; he was an uncompromising pessimist who saw good in nothing. The new order of things which the Reformation promised was utterly repugnant to him; his only hope was in a return to the ideals of mediæval Christianity, and when this hope was destroyed, he turned and vented his resentment on Luther himself.

Barren as the Reformation was in literary monuments outside of Luther's Bible, it exerted a great and inspiring influence on the literature of the sixteenth century. Above all, the drama responded to its stimulus. Towards the end of the fifteenth century a new type of play arose, which provided the outlet, hitherto missing, for the nation's dramatic instincts. This was the "Fastnachtspiel," or shrove-tide play, a kind of dramatised, or merely dialogued, "Schwank," which had taken form in Nürnberg in the hands of Hans Rosenplüt and Hans Folz, two writers who have already been mentioned. In itself the "Fastnachtspiel" was not broad enough to form the basis of a national drama; but it was supplemented by and learned from the Latin School comedy of the humanists; and the German humanists, beginning with Wimpfeling, who wrote his *Stylpho* in 1470, did not stand behind their Italian colleagues in the cultivation of the drama. Thus between indigenous "Fastnachtspiel" and Latin comedy, the conditions were exceedingly favourable for the development of German comedy at the beginning of the sixteenth century; and the Reformation, which was ready to employ the drama in the service of its controversies, provided the leaven of ideas.

The value of the drama as a factor in the spread of the Reformation was first recognised in Switzerland, where, even before Luther's decisive step had been taken, Pamphilus Gengenbach, a native of Nürnberg, had in his *Die Gouchmat* (1516) and *Der Nollhart* (1517), written "Fastnachtspiele" in the interests of moral and religious reform. But the chief representation of the early Swiss

protestant comedy was Niklaus Manuel (1484-1536), who has already been mentioned as the most powerful satirist on the protestant side. Manuel was a native of Bern, and had made a name for himself both as a soldier and a painter. His "Fastnachtsspiele" or dramatic dialogues—for they are little more—*Vom Papst und seiner Priesterschaft* (1522), *Der Ablasskrämer* (1525), *Barbali* (1526), and most trenchant of all, *Von der Messe Krankheit und ihrem letzten Willen* (1528), are, in the first instance, satires; but Manuel had no mean gifts of dramatic characterisation, and under more favourable conditions might have helped to create a genuine national drama.

Outside Switzerland the influence of the Latin comedy was more conspicuous. The fable-writer Burkard Waldis produced in 1527 a play in Low German, *Parall ram vorlorn Söhn*, which has clearly benefited by the influence of the Latin drama; so, too, has the *Susanna* (produced at Basel in 1532) of Sixt Birck (1500-54), a schoolmaster of Augsburg. Better, however, than Birck's

in the castle of Hohenurach. This was in 1590, and a few months later he lost his life in attempting to escape. Frischlin's plays are not all, like his *Rebecca* (1576) and *Susanna* (1577), in Latin; he wrote in the vernacular a historical comedy, *Frau Wendelgard* (1579), the heroine of which is the daughter of Heinrich I., and he planned a series of Biblical dramas, to which belong *Ruth* and *Die Hochzeit zu Cana*. Frischlin is at its best when he is opposing abuses or fighting for ideas; in his *Priscianus vapulans* (1578) he satirises the barbarous Latin of the Middle Ages, in *Julius Cæsar Redivivus* (1584) he brings Cæsar back to earth to wonder at the inventions of gunpowder and printing, and in *Phasma* (1580) he ventures on the dangerous ground of religious controversy and sectarian quarrels. On the whole, these plays mark the high-water level of the German humanistic drama; Frischlin was, no doubt, one of the most gifted German dramatists of his century; but in his outlook on life he was too exclusively a humanist to influence very deeply the vernacular literature.

The representative German poet and dramatist of the sixteenth century is the cobbler of Nürnberg, Hans Sachs, the most complete embodiment of the "bürgerliche" spirit of the age. Born in 1494, he enjoyed a fairly good education and, under the guidance of the Nürnberg Meistersinger schools, worked his way up to the rank of a master in the art of poetry. For more than fifty years he was the acknowledged leader of the Nürnberg Meistergesang, and has left behind him an enormous quantity of verse. His own inventory, made in 1567, enumerates no less than 4275 Meistergesänge and 1773 Spruchgedichte, of which more than two hundred were dramas. He died in 1576.

Hans Sachs made his reputation in the first instance by taking advantage of the new ideals in literature to widen the sphere of the German Meistersinger poetry; he adapted to German needs the treasures of the Italian Renaissance which the humanists were rapidly making common European property. In the second

place, he threw in his lot at an early date with the "Wittembergische Nachtigall," Luther. His "Meisterlieder," his religious poetry, his parables and fables, are as good as any the sixteenth century produced; but while many of his contemporaries showed a strong satiric bias, while others had the power of rising above their own world and seeing things from a more universal standpoint, Sachs remained from first to last a simple storyteller. He rarely said anything in verse which might not as easily have been said in prose, and he wrote entirely from the standpoint of the Nürnberg "Bürger." He reflected the latter's outlook on life, and was content to chronicle faithfully and to describe the civic life around him, townspeople and peasants, monks and artisans, exactly as he saw them. He is the versatile spokesman of his time and people.

But the want of higher poetic thoughts and impulses becomes a virtue in Sachs's verse-anecdotes and stories; his unvarnished narrative adds nothing and subtracts nothing, and in every line is apparent his delight in the mere telling of the story. It is as a dramatist, however, that he has left the most abiding mark on his time. In his hands the "Fastnachtsspiel," which earlier poets had employed only as a means to satiric or controversial ends, receives its final stamp; it becomes a humorous "Schwank" thrown into dramatic dialogue. The best of Sachs's "Fastnachtsspiele," such as *Der fahrende Schüler im Paradies* (1550), *Frau Wahrheit will niemand herbergen* (1550), *Das heisse Eisen* (1551), and *Der Bauer im Fegefeuer* (1552), show that he was not only able to tell an interesting story in dialogue, but could also create genuinely dramatic figures. In the same spirit Hans Sachs wrote comedies and tragedies, although his lack of understanding for the laws of dramatic construction placed these more ambitious efforts at a disadvantage. From the humanist dramatists, it is true, he had borrowed the method of dividing his plays into "Actus," and of assisting the movement of the play by means of an "Ehrenhold" or herald: but his dramas remain, after all, only stories

in dialogue form. His range of subjects was extraordinarily wide; they are taken from the Bible, the Greek and Latin classics, from the old German sagas, as well as from the Italian novelists and contemporary German collections of "Schwänke."

A more powerful and original writer than Sachs was Johann Fischart (ca. 1550-90), perhaps, indeed, the most manly personality in the German literature of the Reformation period. Fischart was born about the middle of the sixteenth century, probably in Strassburg, and was much more deeply immersed in the stream of humanism than the Nürnberg shoemaker. He had been brought up by Kaspar Scheidt, the learned translator of *Grobianus* (1549), a vigorous Latin satire by F. Dedekind (ca. 1525-98) on the coarseness and brutality of the age; and he had travelled widely. Like Hans Sachs, he began as a champion of the Reformation, but the satires on the catholics, which he adapted from French and Dutch originals — *Der Bienenkorb des heiligen römischen Immenschwarms* (1579) and *Das Jesuiterhüttlein* (1580) — are much more definite in their aims than the comparatively ineffectual satire that accompanied the Reformation movement in its early stages. Fischart's *Philosophisches Ehezuchtbüchlein* (1578), the most pleasing of all his prose writings, shows how close the ties were that bound him to the humanists; and in his best poem, *Das glückhafte Schiff von Zürich* (1576), he had learned a lesson in form from the classic masterpieces which the Renaissance had made popular. This, the best German poem of the whole sixteenth century, tells how in the summer of 1576 a number of Zürich citizens made in a single day the voyage from Zürich to Strassburg in order to take part in a shooting festival. The bonds of neighbourly feeling are symbolised by a basin of millet porridge, which, cooked in the morning before the party leaves Zürich, still retains its warmth when their vessel reaches Strassburg at nightfall.

While Sachs merely skimmed the surface of his age, Fischart plunged deep into its social and intellectual

movements, regardless of their coarseness or brutality. That broad virility, which in Murner shrank at nothing, is revived again, this time on the protestant side, by Fischart. He had not studied under the translator of the *Grobianus* for nothing, and his epic *Flöh Hatz, Weiber Tratz* (1573) falls little short of Murner's satires in its coarseness. But the fact that Fischart lived a generation later than his catholic predecessor enabled him to draw more easily on the later Renaissance literatures, and in Rabelais he found a congenial master. Fischart's masterpiece is his translation or adaptation of the first book of Rabelais's comic romance, which appeared in German under the extraordinary title, *Affenteurlich naupengeheurliche Geschichtklitterung vom Leben, Raten und Taten der Helden und Herren Grandgusier, Gargantua und Pantagrue* (1575). Rabelais is here translated as no writer has ever been translated before or since. A translation, indeed, it is impossible to call Fischart's book; it is an adaptation which has swollen to three times the size of the original; a clumsy, unwieldy book, the humour of which consists in the heaping up of incongruous epithets, a book which forfeits all claim on our interest by its absurd exaggerations and its insufferable formlessness. And yet, in spite of its unpromising and repellent exterior, or rather by virtue of it, Fischart's *Geschichtklitterung* reflects the intellectual temper of its time; it is as completely German as its original is French, and a characteristic product of the dominant factors in the intellectual life of the sixteenth century, humanism and protestantism.

The new spirit which expressed itself unmistakably in the writings of Fischart, also found a congenial outlet in the later developments of the "Schwank." Jörg Wickram (died ca. 1560), a Meistersinger of Colmar, to whose longer novels we shall return in a later chapter, produced in his *Rollwagenbüchlein* (1555)—that is, "Büchlein" for the use of travellers in the diligence or "Rollwagen"—an excellent popular collection of such anecdotes, which was speedily followed by a large number of imitations, such as



M. Montanus's *Wegkürzer* (1557), M. Lindener's *Rastbüchlein* (1558), and H. W. Kirchhoff's *Wendunmut* (1565). These were the legitimate successors of the long line of collections of "Schwänke" which extended unbroken from the Middle Ages to the Reformation. Fischart's satires on the catholics found successors in *Der treue Eckart* (1588) and *Die lautere Wahrheit* (1585) by Bartholomäus Ringwaldt (ca. 1530-99), and the beast epic was brought into the service of the Reformation by Georg Röllenhagen (1542-1609), author of the *Froschmäuseler* (1595), a modernised version of the Greek "battle of the frogs and mice." In this century, too, the "Volksbuch" became, like the Volkslied, a vehicle of expression for the nation's aspirations; and in one of these "Volksbücher," the *Historia von D. Johann Fausten*, published at Frankfort-on-the-Main in 1587, we find an illustration of how the German people of the sixteenth century interpreted the intellectual liberation which protestantism conferred on them. Like so many dreamers in the history of his time, the Faust of the "Volksbuch" hopes to obtain by means of alchemy, astrology, and magic, rest from the longings that harass him; he makes a pact with the devil, who opens up to him new worlds of unlimited enjoyment and unlimited knowledge; he travels far and wide, to Italy and the East, and conjures up the most beautiful woman of all time, Helen of Troy, until at last the twenty-four years for which he had stipulated come to an end and he is carried off in triumph to hell. Such is the earliest form in which the immortal story appears,—a story which, two centuries later, Goethe made use of to show that human aspiration, human longings and ambitions are not, as the sixteenth century believed, to be rewarded with eternal damnation, but are the most precious attributes of our race.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE RENAISSANCE IN GERMANY.

THE seventeenth century, contrasted with this epoch in other lands, is a dark age in Germany's intellectual history. Her literature, it is true, is voluminous enough, but it has no root in the soil, and consists for the most part of artificial and ill-adapted imitations of foreign models. Thus the century which in England was rung in by Shakespeare and his great contemporaries and closed with Milton and Dryden, the century of Ariosto and Tasso, of Cervantes, Calderón, and Lope de Vega, the age of Louis XIV., is mainly a period of negation in Germany.

For this there were two reasons, one political, the other inherent in the conditions of German literary development. The seventeenth century was the century of the Thirty Years' War; from 1618 to 1648, that terrible struggle between the two great spiritual powers in Europe, catholicism and protestantism, devastated German lands, as no lands before or since in the history of civilised peoples have been devastated. The population of Germany was reduced to one-fourth of what it had been when the war began, and from comparative affluence the country was brought to the extremes of poverty. Worst of all, the uncertainty of life and property, and the desolation which the armies left in their train, demoralised the nation. This alone was sufficient to destroy any literature that drew its vitality from the national life. There was, however,

another and more subtle reason for the intellectual bankruptcy of Germany in the seventeenth century. The literature which the Reformation inaugurated and inspired had come to a natural end; it had been, in the best sense, popular and indigenous; but, like all purely indigenous literatures, it voiced the mood and aspirations of a very definite age; it was incapable of adapting itself to new conditions, and not strong enough to maintain its existence against the powerful influence of neighbouring literatures. Thus, even had the 'Thirty Years' War not checked all healthy development, the literary movement of the seventeenth century in Germany would have had to make a fresh start; it could not merely have carried on the traditions of the Reformation.

form of literature. Although a German version of *Hamlet* had been played in Germany in Shakespeare's lifetime, more than a hundred years had to elapse before Shakespeare was even known by name to the Germans.

Not from England, but from the Latin peoples came the regeneration of German literature; the seventeenth century was the century of the Renaissance. The history of this movement in Germany is a weak reflection of the literary evolution which had taken place in Italy and France. The German humanists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were the pioneers; and in the course of the following century German literature passed through the same three stages through which Renaissance literature elsewhere passed: a period of vigorous youth, a middle period of artificiality and stylistic vagaries, and a third period of classic rigour.

For the first of these periods Germany's immediate models were the poets of the French "Pléiade." In Heidelberg, the focus of the German Renaissance, Paul Schede, or, as he Latinised his name, Melissus, had, as early as 1572, translated into German verse the French version of the *Psalms* by Clément Marot, and, fourteen years later, when Schede was settled as librarian

was not a South German, but a Silesian. It was in Heidelberg, however, that his genius was first fully recognised. Born at Bunzlau in 1597, he came as a student to Heidelberg in 1619, where a Latin treatise, entitled *Aristarchus* (1617), and some poetry had heralded his arrival. During the few months he stayed in Heidelberg, the Renaissance movement in German literature was born. In 1620 Opitz went to Holland, where he came under the influence of the Dutch Renaissance movement, especially of Daniel Heinsius (1580-1655). His life was chequered and varied enough: we find him for a time in Holstein, then as a professor in Transylvania; in Vienna, a little later, he was formally crowned laureate by the Emperor Ferdinand II., who subsequently ennobled him as Opitz von Boberfeld. For a time he was

to great poetry. Opitz's original verse exemplifies only too plainly his theory that an observance of the rules was sufficient to make the poet. His poetry is, however, not all uninspired, and his best poems, the collection entitled *Trostgedichte in Widerwärtigkeit des Krieges* (1633), contain lines as good as any written in the seventeenth century in Germany. He laboured diligently to bring German literature under the Renaissance yoke; he translated Sophocles and Seneca, as well as Rinuccini's Italian opera *Dafne* (1627); he introduced the Renaissance novel with translations of Barclay's *Argenis* (1626) and Sidney's *Arcadia* (1629), and followed these with a pastoral of his own, the *Schäfferei von der Nymphen Hercine* (1630).

In the furtherance of his aims Opitz was assisted by the many literary or rather linguistic societies which sprang up throughout Germany in the first half of the seventeenth century and tided German literature over the stormy epoch of the war. The first of these societies, "Die fruchtbringende Gesellschaft," or "Der Palmenorden," founded under the presidency of Prince Ludwig of Anhalt-Cöthen in the year 1617, was a direct imitation of the famous linguistic academy of Florence, the Accademia della Crusca or "Bran Academy," so called because it was designed to purify the pure flour of Italian speech from the bran of barbarisms. In the same way the German society followed "fructifying" aims, each of the members taking a pseudonym bearing on that function. In Hamburg, again, Johann Rist (1607-67), a lyric poet and dramatist of some distinction, founded the "Elbschwanenorden." Such societies no doubt furthered the linguistic reforms for which Opitz fought; but in literature the results of their activity were more questionable. G. P. Harsdörffer (1607-58), for instance, one of the founders of the famous Nürnberg society, "Der gekrönte Blumenorden" or "Pegnitz Shepherds," reduced, in all seriousness, the poetic theories of Opitz to absurdity by writing a *Poetischer Trichter* (1647-53), which professed to "pour" the art of poetry into any one in six hours.

With Opitz the literary focus of Germany was transferred to the north-east; the members of his school, which is sometimes called the "First Silesian School," made Königsberg for a time their headquarters. At least two poets among Opitz's disciples, Simon Dach (1605-59) and Paul Fleming (1609-40), were more gifted than their master. These two men present the greatest possible contrast; the one was a shy, retiring, melancholy professor of poetry in Königsberg, the other a burly Saxon who wandered far afield—he spent five years in the East—and looked life in the face with a manly straightforwardness; but they have both one quality in common, they make us forget their allegiance to Opitz and his rules.

While Dach and Fleming thus showed that the Renaissance rules were not inconsistent with the production of genuine poetry, on another, and perhaps the most gifted of them all, Opitz's fetters lie heavy, namely, on the chief dramatist of the German Renaissance, Andreas Gryphius. Like Opitz, Gryphius was a Silesian; he was born in 1616—the year of Shakespeare's death—in Breslau, as the syndic of which town he died in 1664, a hundred years after Shakespeare was born. His lyric poetry, especially the *Sonn- und Feiertags-Sonette* (1639) and *Kirchhofsgedanken* (1656), show him to have been a man who had tasted more of the bitterness of life than his brother poets; he felt more modernly, and had what the principles of Opitz made extremely difficult to practise, the art of expressing those feelings sincerely. It was only with difficulty that Gryphius squeezed and trimmed his melancholy reflections to fit the recognised verse-forms. Still more disastrous was the effect of the Renaissance poetics on his dramatic work. Under more favourable conditions, Gryphius might have been the founder of a national drama; as it was, he struggled vainly with the bloodless, epic tragedy of the Renaissance theatre, and with no better models to imitate than the plays of the Dutch poets, Hooft and Vondel; it is thus no wonder that his *Leo Armenius* (1650), *Katharina von Georgien* (1657), and even such daring innovations as his tragedy, *Ermordete Majestät*,

*oder Carolus Stuardus, König von Gross-Britannien* (1657), on an almost contemporary theme, and *Cardenio und Celinde* (1657), a forerunner of the "tragedy of common life" of the eighteenth century, fail to convey even a semblance of reality. In comedy, Gryphius retained a freer hand, perhaps because the paralysing influence of Seneca did not lie so heavy on the Renaissance comedy. In his *Horribilicribrifax* (1663), the hero of which, a bragging soldier, was a favourite figure with the Renaissance dramatists, and in *Herr Peter Squentz* (1663), a merry adaptation of the comic scenes of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Gryphius revealed comic power of a quite remarkable order; these are the best, indeed the only outstanding German comedies of the seventeenth century.

Perhaps the greatest positive achievement which, besides its literary theory, we owe directly to the Renaissance in Germany, is the epigrams of the poet who, in the "Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft," bore the sobriquet of "der Verkleinernde," Friedrich von Logau. Logau, too, was a Silesian, but no friend of the Opitzian school; Opitz he admired as a poet, but he had little faith in the art of making poetry by rule of thumb. His outlook on the life of the time was sane and wise; he could rise sufficiently above the strife of the day to see the hollowness of a religious faith that permitted the callous bloodshed of the Thirty Years' War; he had faith enough in his own people to ridicule their slavish imitation of French manners and customs, and to condemn unsparingly the taste which interlarded his native language with French words and phrases. Born at Brockut, near Nimptsch, in 1604, Logau held an official position in the service of the Duke of Liegnitz; and he died at Liegnitz in 1655. In 1638 appeared his first collection of epigrams under the title *Erstes Hundert deutscher Reimensprüche*, but the main collection was not published until 1654, *Deutscher Sinngedichte drei Tausend*. Logau concealed his authorship under an anagram, "Salomon von Golaw," and so effectually that it was not until over a hundred



years later that Ramler and Lessing in their reprint of the epigrams revealed who "Golaw" really was. As far as form is concerned, Logau is an epigrammatist of the normal Renaissance type—that is to say, he takes Martial as his model; but he has made the form his own; and there are not many among these three thousand epigrams upon which he has not set the stamp of his own strong personality. Logau is Germany's greatest epigrammatist.

Thus in the seventeenth century the politer, more polished epigram took the place of the full-blooded satire of the Reformation; indeed, it almost seemed as if satire had now withdrawn to Low German lands. The representative satirists of the period, Johann Lauremberg (1590-1658) and Joachim Rachel (1618-69), are both Low Germans. The former, a native of Rostock, wrote in 1652 four admirable *Scherzgedichte* in the Low German dialect of his home. A kindly humour rather than satire is the ground-tone of Lauremberg's poetry, and it seems in keeping with the homely dialect which, from motives of patriotism, he chose. In the High German translation which soon followed, the poems lose something of their force. The faith of Rachel in Opitz, on the other hand, was stronger than his patriotism; in early Volkslieder he showed promise as a Low German poet, but he preferred to write his six *Satirische Gedichte* (1664) in the High German speech which Opitz alone recognised; he has not, however, the originality and force of Lauremberg.

The lyric poetry of the seventeenth century was not restricted to the experiments in classic forms which the more rigid adherents of the Renaissance movement favoured, and the more sincere, if still classic, lyrics of poets like Dach and Fleming. The lyric genius of the people, which in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries had produced the great Volkslieder, found its outlet now in religious poetry; the seventeenth century is the age of the German hymn. Both catholic and protestant poets contributed to this religious lyric, the former giving ex-

pression to the subtle mystic and allegorical tendencies of the age, the latter ministering in a practical way to the immediate spiritual needs of the people.

Now, as in the pre-Reformation age, the revival of a more intense religious life was heralded by mysticism. In 1612 Jakob Böhme (1575-1624), a shoemaker of Görlitz in Silesia, published his first book, *Aurora, oder Morgenröte im Aufgang*. Under the guise of a strange, allegorical imagery, Böhme set forth in this book a spiritual mysticism, which acted as a solvent on the rapidly stiffening dogmas of the churches. His philosophy was a leaven of inspiration for the lyric poetry of the century. Böhme's immediate influence is to be seen in the poetry of the Silesian writer, Johann Scheffler, who preferred to be known as "Angelus Silesius." Scheffler was born in the year in which Böhme died, and of a protestant family; he was educated as a doctor and practised in Breslau, and in 1652 became a convert to Catholicism. In 1657 his poetry appeared in two volumes, *Heilige Seelenlust, oder geistliche Hirtenlieder der in ihren Jesum verliebten Psyche*, and *Geistreiche Sinn- und Schlussreime zur göttlichen Beschaulichkeit*, the latter better known under the title it bore in the second edition, *Der cherubinische Wandersmann* (1674). Scheffler died in 1677. He held aloof from the German Renaissance movement, but it is clear from his poetry that his horizon was bounded by the pastoral poetry of the time; his allegory has the unmistakable Renaissance stamp. His strength lies, however, not in the literary forms and traditions he adopted, but in the strange mystic couplets and strophes of the *Cherubinische Wandersmann*. The logical consequences of Böhme's pantheism, which saw God in all things and preached the oneness of the human soul with God, were carried out by Scheffler with a ruthlessness that does not shrink before the most startling paradoxes.

The fusion of pious religious feeling with the allegory of the Renaissance is also to be seen in the poetry of Friedrich von Spee (1591-1635). Although a strict Jesuit, Spee did not allow himself to be blinded by the

supplications of his time; his own life was embittered by his having, as professor in Würzburg, to prepare for the stake witches in whose innocence he believed. He died of fever caught while nursing the sick and the wounded in the hospital of Treves. His poetry is collected under the fantastic title, *Trutz-Nachtigall, oder geistlich-pöbellicher Lauterhallen* (1640),—a book which, in spite of its artificial conventions, has still a certain charm; the outward form may be of the Renaissance, but the calm humanity of Speer's faith and the warmth of his feeling for nature make the impression of complete sincerity.

The national religious poetry of the seventeenth century, the real heir of the Volk-lied, was unquestionably the protestant hymn. It was a form of literature on which neither the war nor the preoccupation of the nation with embittered religious strife seems to have had any deterrent effect; in hours of adversity the people turned to their hymns as a consolation and a refuge. The hymn of this century was directly modelled on that of Luther; and the line of great hymn-writers from Luther onwards was continuous. At the same time there is, in the course of these hundred years, strangely little development to record; the hymn became perhaps more harmonious and less militant, but the spiritual standpoint changed little, and the poetic form even less. Paul Gerhardt (1607-76), the greatest religious poet of the seventeenth century, was a protestant preacher of the Lutheran type, first at Berlin, then at Lübben on the Spree; and he fought all his life for what he believed to be the best interests of protestantism. His hymns, of which the first collected edition appeared under the title *Geistliche Andachten* in 1667, were written in the direct service of the church and form the backbone of the protestant hymnal. It can hardly be said that Gerhardt was in the highest sense an inspired poet; his hymns were not even the expression of a personal, spiritual need; his aim was merely to express in the simple language of the people its spiritual faith. The dictum that the great battle-songs

and great hymns of the world have never been written by its greatest poets is eminently true of German religious poetry in the seventeenth century. For Gerhardt was only one of many Lutheran pastors who at that time composed religious poetry which found its way to the hearts of the people; indeed, it is extraordinary how many masterpieces of the German hymnal emanated from otherwise quite unknown men,—men who had no kind of relation to literature at all. If Gerhardt stands out prominently from the many, it is not because he was as a poet so much greater than his contemporaries, but because he wrote a larger number of great hymns. From the decay of the Volkslied in the later sixteenth century to the first quarter at least of the eighteenth century, German lyric poetry is to be seen at its best in the hymns of the protestant church.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE LATER SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

SUBJECTION to the ideals of the Latin Renaissance was one characteristic feature of German literature in the seventeenth century; another was the predominance—a predominance in which, however, Germany did not stand alone—of the novel. The novel swallowed up, as it were, several forms of literature which in the previous century existed independently of it; satire appears now mainly in the form of fiction, and didactic poetry has given place to didactic novels.

The beginnings of a modern, that is to say, modern as opposed to mediæval, novel, have been traced in Germany to a writer who has been already mentioned, Jorg Wickram of Colmar. The influence of French and Italian models no doubt assisted Wickram to get beyond the purely mediæval type of romance, as he did in his best novels, *Der jungen Knaben Spiegel* (1554), *Der irrschreitende Pilger* (1556), and *Der Goldfaden* (1557). Wickram was modern in so far as he recognised the reorganisation of society on a wider, more democratic basis, and saw in the psychological development of his personages a more interesting theme for his fiction than the succession of adventures which made up the older novel. But the demolition of the mediæval romance was more effectually carried out in Spain; and the Spanish novel made its appearance in Germany early in the seventeenth century. *Lazarillo de Tormes*, the earliest Spanish picaresque romance, was translated into German in 1617, and *Don*

*Quixote* partially translated at least in 1625. In 1642-43 appeared in a complete edition the *Wunderliche und wahrhaftige Gesichte Philanders von Sittewald*, a remarkable contribution to satiric fiction. The author of this book, which is a German imitation of the *Sueños*, or "Dreams" of Francisco de Quevedo, was Hans Michael Moscherosch (1601-69), an Alsatian, whose family was probably of Spanish origin. As an official in villages in Lorraine he had had more than his share of the horrors of the Thirty Years' War; he then obtained an appointment as town-secretary in Strassburg, where he wrote his *Gesichte*, embodying in them, no doubt, many of his own earlier experiences. Vanity, hypocrisy, injustice, licentiousness, the slavery of Germany in matters of customs and taste to France, are the themes of his satires. In the vision entitled *Höllenkinder* he sees his contemporaries floundering in the flames of hell, and in *Soldatenleben* the demoralisation of the land by the mercenaries of the war is painted in vividly realistic colours. Only about one half of Moscherosch's book is a direct imitation of the Spanish work; the rest is entirely his own.

Links may also be found connecting the fiction of the seventeenth century with a form of German prose which had divided the field with satire in the preceding century, namely, didactic and religious literature, above all, the sermon. Here two writers have to be mentioned, the Protestant North German, Johann Balthasar Schupp (1610-61) and the South German monk, Ulrich Megerle, better known as Abraham a Santa Clara (1644-1709). The lives and the writings of these two men form an instructive contrast. Schupp, a native of Giessen, was an admirable example of the pugnacious Lutheran clergyman; he had himself had experience of the rough student-life of the time—the University of Giessen was notorious in this respect in the seventeenth century—and he had wandered on foot all over Europe. He was for a time professor in Marburg before he accepted a call to the church of St Jakobi in Hamburg. In Hamburg his

rough popular tone was not to all tastes, and his career there was not free from thorns; but fighting was the breath of life to him, and his words carried conviction. More interesting to us to-day than his sermons is the little tract, *Der Freund in der Not* (1657), in which he chronicled as a warning to his son his own experiences at the university.

Schupp did not shrink from jests and witticisms in his sermons, but in this respect Abraham a Santa Clara (1644-1709), who rose to be Court preacher in Vienna, left him far behind; where Schupp is merely coarse, Santa Clara is scurrilous. The witty monk is wholly lacking in the North German's earnestness; but his biting sarcasm was quite as effective in dealing with his public as Schupp's direct bludgeoning. Schupp had the blunt, straightforward Lutheran mind, Santa Clara the mercurial imagination of a wit and a poet. His tracts, such as *Merk's Wien!* (1680) and *Auf, auf, ihr Christen!* (1680), of which the latter is perhaps best known, as it served Schiller as a model for the sermon of the Capuchin monk in *Wallensteins Lager*, belong to literature in a higher degree than to theology; they stand in line with the writings of Murner and Fischart in the previous century. In the mixture of sermon and novel which makes up his chief work, *Judas der Erzscheim* (1686), the novel is the more interesting component. Santa Clara revives here the mediæval romance which gathered round the figure of Judas Ischariot, and represented him to have been the victim of an Œdipus-like fate before his appearance in the Gospel narrative. But, after all, however interesting Santa Clara's story may be, he obviously attached more importance to the interspersed sermons than to his plot. The main value of the book now is that it shows how the new prose romance was encroaching on all domains, even on that of the sermon.

But the chief German novel of the seventeenth century, and the greatest imaginative work of that century in the German tongue, had appeared nearly twenty years before *Judas der Erzscheim*. This was *Der abenteuerliche*

*Simplicissimus Teutsch, das ist: die Beschreibung des Lebens eines seltsamen Vaganten, genannt Melchior Sternfels von Fuchsheim*, by Johann Jakob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen. A native of Hesse, where he was born about 1624, Grimmelshausen had tasted to the full the horrors of the Thirty Years' War. As a boy of ten he had been carried off, like his hero, by soldiers, and no doubt much else in his novel is autobiography rather than romance. The last years of his life were passed as a town official of the little town of Renchen, on the western borders of the Black Forest. He died in 1676. Grimmelshausen's first literary efforts were in the style which had been made popular by Moscherosch; he also translated a French novel of adventure; then, in 1669, appeared his *Simplicissimus*, which, like the *Gesichte* of his predecessor, was also influenced by Spanish literature; *Simplicissimus* is a "Schelmenroman" or picaresque romance.

Simplicius Simplicissimus is brought up in the Spessart by a peasant, whom he believes to be his father. He is a simple child who plays his "Sackpfeife," or bagpipe, and herds his flock in happy innocence. His first glimpse of the world comes to him, as it came to Parzival in Wolfram von Eschenbach's epic, from soldiers, rough cuirassiers who fall upon the village, pillage and burn the houses, and carry off Simplicissimus, he clinging to his bagpipe as his most precious possession. Like Parzival again, he comes to a hermit in a forest, who, as he discovers long afterwards, is his own father, and for two years he sits at the hermit's feet learning wisdom from him. The hermit dies and Simplicius once more falls into the hands of soldiers. He is brought to the Governor of Hanau, who learns that he is his own nephew, and makes him his page. But Simplicius is ill-adapted for a life of this kind; he is only laughed at, and an attempt is even made to convert him into a court fool by unhinging his mind. One day he is carried off by Croats and experiences all the barbarism of the war. Gradually, however, he accustoms himself to their wild



mode of life and becomes a thief and an adventurer. In two comrades, Olivier and Herzbruder, he finds his good and his bad angel, and the fortune of war for a time favours him. He falls into the hands of the Swedes, but is well treated; he also discovers a large treasure, and is inveigled into an unhappy marriage. In the course of further adventures he finds his way to Cologne and Paris, where he prospers as "beau Alman." Meanwhile, however, he has lost all his wealth, and has no option but to become a soldier again. His old comrade Olivier tempts him to join him in a life of open brigandage; Herzbruder leads him back to his true self. His wife is dead, and he longs for a peaceful life. He buys a farm and marries again, but this marriage is also unhappy, and he seeks consolation in his love for adventure; he goes out once more into the world, penetrating as far as Asia. After three years he returns to find his foster-father in the Spessart dead, and settles down among his long-forgotten books to a life of meditation and repentance.

Later, Grimmelshausen was tempted to provide his story with a continuation, which, however, like most continuations, is too consciously an effort to surpass the original story; only the close, where the hero retires to a lonely island, has a special interest as providing a link between the picaresque novel of the seventeenth century and the novel of realistic adventure ushered in by *Robinson Crusoe* in the eighteenth. Much better than this continuation are Grimmelshausen's shorter stories, *Die Landstörzerin Courasche* (ca. 1669), *Der seltsame Springinsfeld* (1670), and *Das wunderbarliche Vogelnest* (1672), which, grouped together as *Simplicianische Schriften*, afford pictures of the Thirty Years' War supplementary to those in his great novel.

A less spontaneous genius than Grimmelshausen was Christian Weise (1642-1708), rector of the Gymnasium at Zittau, who distinguished himself as a lyric poet, as a novelist, and a dramatist. He is perhaps seen to best advantage in his first capacity; the natural *Überflüssige Gedanken der grünenden Jugend* h

as he himself despised these poems in later life, is a relief after the stiff artificiality of the Renaissance lyric. But Weise did not himself see the salvation of literature in this return to natural simplicity; he rather believed that it must become more didactic and moral. His novels, of which *Die drei ärgsten Erznarren in der ganzen Welt* (1672), and *Die drei klügsten Leute in der ganzen Welt* (1675) are best known, are satirical in an unambiguously didactic way, not with Grimmelshausen's genial openness. As a dramatist, Weise was extraordinarily prolific, but only about half of his fifty-five plays have been published. These, however, stand apart from the general literary movement of the century, for they were written in the first instance for performance by the author's scholars in Zittau; like the Latin comedy of the previous century, Weise's was a School comedy. In the art and technique of the drama Weise is really no further advanced than Gryphius, but he at least writes a simpler and more natural prose. As examples of his plays may be mentioned *Die triumphierende Keuschheit* (1668), a modernised adaptation of the story of Joseph and Potiphar, the comedy *Bäurischer Macchiavellus* (1679), a tragedy on the subject of *Masaniello* (1682), and *Die unvergnügte Seele* (1688). A verbose version of the *Taming of the Shrew*, *Komödie von der bösen Katharina*, written in 1705, has also been recently reprinted. But the day of the drama had not yet come in Germany, and Weise had little influence in hastening its arrival. In the field of fiction the worthiest successor of *Simplicissimus* was not Weise's work, but another German picaresque novel on Spanish lines, *Schelmuffs kys wahrhaftige, curiöse und sehr gefährliche Reisebeschreibung zu Wasser und Lande* (1696). The author of this vividly written braggart romance, the forerunner of the celebrated *Münchhausen*, was only discovered in comparatively recent years to have been a young student, Christian Reuter, born near Halle in 1665.

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In the last quarter of the seventeenth century the German Renaissance passed into what we have called

the second phase in the general development of Renaissance literature—that is to say, the phase of degeneration which in all European literatures set in after the first outburst of early Renaissance poetry and preceded the second, riper period dominated by French classicism. The phase of German literature now to be considered, the so-called “Second Silesian School,” is, in the evolution of Renaissance literature, parallel to the movement which in Italy was represented by Marino, in Spain by Gongora, in England by Lyly and the Euphuists, and in France by the *précieuses ridicules* of the Hôtel de Rambouillet. Thus at a time when France had touched the zenith of her greatest period of classicism, Germany had hardly even reached the stage preparatory to such a period.

rather the very earliest and crudest forms of Renaissance tragedy; the main impression they leave behind them is of a constant aping of Seneca's style and a striving after a rhetorical sublimity that is never attained. In addition to this, Lobenstein revels in barbarous horrors as hardly another European poet of the seventeenth century; subjects like those of his *Cleopatra* (1661), *Agrippina* (1665), and *Sophonisba* (1680), do not attract him by their poetic possibilities, but by the opportunities they afford of describing cruelty, bloodshed, and incest.

As was to be expected, the novel of the Second Sillesian School kept more in touch with what was being done under Renaissance influence in other European lands than either its lyric or drama; for in the heroic romances of France and their equivalents in other lands the artificial style of the second Renaissance period still lingered. The French gallant novels found an eager public in Germany, and several had been translated at an early date by the founder of one of the Hamburg linguistic societies, Philipp von Zesen (1619-89), a native of Dessau. Zesen's own stories of this class, such as *Die adriatische Rosemund* (1645) and *Simson, eine Helden- und Liebesgeschichte* (1679), were no less popular. That the object of this form of romance was not merely to entertain, but also to be a school of manners, is seen in the lengthy books by Duke Anton Ulrich of Brunswick (1633-1714), *Die durchläuchtige Syrerin Aramena* (1669-73) and *Die römische Oktavia* (1677), as well as in *Herkules und Valiska* (1659-60) by A. H. Bucholtz (1607-71), a novel which enjoyed an extraordinarily long-lived popularity. Didactic, too, are the voluminous geographical and historical romances of E. W. Happel (1648-90). Two books, however, stand out from this general mass of artificial fiction, and are worthy of more careful attention. One is *Die asiatische Banise, oder blutiges doch mutiges Peru* (1689), by Heinrich Anshelm von Ziegler (1663-96), the best German novel of the heroic type, a book the exotic scenery and vigorously drawn characters of which kept it alive, in spite of the

rhetorical bombast of its language, until late in the eighteenth century. The other is Lohenstein's one novel, *Grossmütiger Feldherr Arminius, oder Hermann als ein tapferer Beschirmer der deutschen Freiheit nebst seiner durchlächtigsten Thusnelda* (1689-90), which in its patriotism and truth of observation stands in closer relation to actuality than any other product of Lohenstein's school; it is one of the few books of this decadent time that show a promise of better things.

It was perhaps the best that could have happened for the ultimate regeneration of the nation that in this century of the Thirty Years' War, when a popular or national literature was impossible, the Germans should have looked abroad for their poetic inspiration. But in the fifty years that elapsed between the Peace of Westphalia and the close of the century, the progress of their literature was disappointingly slow; it remained for the eighteenth century to make clear that Renaissance models alone could not effect the salvation of German poetry.

## CHAPTER X.

### FRENCH CLASSICISM AND ENGLISH NATURALISM.

THE eighteenth century in the intellectual development of Europe presents a Janus-like aspect: it looks both backwards and forwards. On the one hand, it carries the literary movement inaugurated by the Renaissance and the spiritual revival associated with the Reformation, to a higher and highest point; and, on the other, it is the century in which the leading nations of Europe, England, France, Germany, one after the other, discovered, by virtue of a return to nature and to unfettered modes of thought, their true selves. Thus it is at the same time the century of classicism and rationalism, and the century of individualism and sentimentalism. In England and France these two movements stand in more or less acute antagonism to each other, and it was Germany's mission to effect a reconciliation between them. In German thought and poetry we are able to discern a steady endeavour to overcome the dual character of the century, a movement towards a classicism which afforded room for individual expansion and towards a humanism which combined the clear vision of the "Aufklärung" with a noble idealism.

It is difficult to find a definite starting-point for the literary movement of the eighteenth century. The historian of English literature usually begins his study of the period with the Restoration, that is to say, forty years too early; the German, on the other hand, is rather tempted to postpone what he calls eighteenth-century literature



until after the year 1740. That year marks an epoch both in German political history—it was the date of Frederick the Great's accession to the throne of Prussia and of Maria Theresa's to that of Austria—and in the history of German literature; in 1740 took place the famous literary battle between Gottsched in Leipzig, the champion of French classicism, and Bodmer and Breitingen the two Zürich critics who won the first victories for English naturalism on the continent.

The literature of the previous forty years of the eighteenth century in Germany is imitative and uninspired. Completely overshadowed by the French seventeenth century, it is, one might say, the German equivalent of that stage in the evolution of Renaissance ideas which found its complete expression in the "grand siècle" of Louis XIV. The group of North German poets, the so-called "Hofpoeten"—Rudolf von Canitz (1654-99), Benjamin Neukirch (1665-1729), Johann von Besser (1654-1729), J. V. Pietsch (1690-1733), J. U. von König (1688-1744)—who set themselves up in opposition to Hofmannswaldau and Lohenstein, were only superior to these poets in their better taste and avoidance of bombast. For the rest, they pinned their faith on Boileau and were but mediocres endowed with poetic talent. To this circle belonged, however, one inspired lyric poet, Johann Christian Günther (1695-1723), whose unhappy life was cut short at the age of twenty-eight. Günther's lyrics—his first collection of *Gedichte* appeared in 1724—show a felicity of expression and smoothness of rhythm worthy of his best predecessors in the seventeenth century, Dach and Fleming, and an emotional sincerity which foreshadows the lyric of Klopstock and Goethe. But Günther was an exception and, at his best, has little in common with the pseudo-classic "court poets," with whom he is associated.

The chief representative of this North German classicism on the French model was Johann Christoph Gottsched, who was born at Judithenkirch, near Königsberg, in 1700, and found his way at the age of twenty-four to

Leipzig, which was at that time the intellectual metropolis of Germany. As a member, and later as the "Senior" of the "Deutschübende Gesellschaft" in Leipzig, and as the editor of several periodicals, he rapidly made his way to the front; and in 1730, his *Versuch einer Kritischen Dichtkunst*, a practical treatise embodying the pseudo-classic dogmas of literary composition, established his right to speak with authority. From theory Gottsched passed to practice; he succeeded in enlisting the sympathies of the best theatrical company of the time for his ideas, that at the head of which stood Johann and Karoline Neuber, and with their assistance he declared war on the crude melodramatic "Haupt- und Staatsaktionen," then popular, and established the masterpieces of the French classical drama on the German stage; he insisted on the actors avoiding bombastic rant and vulgar buffoonery, and thereby brought the theatre into touch, as it had hardly ever been before in Germany, with literature. This was a great point gained, even if Gottsched's zeal for French ideals led him to neglect elements in the native drama which were worthy of development. Gottsched's main task was to provide the theatre with plays, and between 1740 and 1745 he published six volumes entitled *Deutsche Schaubühne nach den Regeln der alten Griechen und Römer eingerichtet*, which contained mainly translations from the French. He himself wrote an original tragedy *Der sterbende Cato* (1732), based partly on a French play by J. Deschamps and partly on that by Addison; in spite of its indifferent merit, Gottsched's tragedy held the German stage for many years. Gottsched had little or no creative genius, but his wife, Luise Adelgunde Gottsched (1713-62), was the author of several excellent comedies which enjoyed deserved popularity.

This varied activity between 1730 and 1740 brought Gottsched's reputation to a culminating point; he was generally recognised as the privileged dictator of German letters. In 1740, however, the blow fell: a new movement in German criticism arose, championed by two Swiss critics. Bodmer and Breitinger, and in the virulent contro-

versy that ensued, Gottsched was completely discredited. So disastrous indeed was his defeat that, although he lived till 1766, he sank almost into obscurity, all the less deserved when it is remembered that after 1740 he published works of such solid merit as his *Grundlegung einer deutschen Sprachkunst* (1748), which helped materially to normalise the German literary language of the eighteenth century, and his still valuable *Nötiger Vorrat zur Geschichte der deutschen dramatischen Dichtkunst* (1757-65).

Before dealing with Gottsched's opponents, we must return to the beginning of the century and trace the beginnings of that new spirit which was ultimately to dislodge French pseudo-classicism. Even before the close of the seventeenth century, a freer breath passed over German intellectual life; the harsh dogmatism of Lutheranism gave way before the emotional appeal of pietism, the first and greatest representative of which was Philipp Jakob Spener (1635-1705), an Alsatian preacher and the author of the text-book of the new faith, the *Desideria pia, oder herzliches Verlangen nach gottgefälliger Besserung der wahren evangelischen Kirche* (1680). And in the train of this religious revival came a fresh outburst of religious song, which showed that the traditions of the preceding century had not died out. To pietism we owe the still familiar hymns of Spener himself, of J. Neander (1650-80), G. Tersteegen (1697-1769), and N. L. von Zinzendorf (1700-60), the founder of the sect of "Herrnhuter" or Moravian Brethren.

Meanwhile, the influence of Hobbes and the English deists was gradually making its way into Germany; and in its train rationalism advanced rapidly, holding the balance at the universities with pietism. Christian Thomasius (1655-1728), the pioneer of the new philosophy, delivered at Leipzig in the winter of 1687-88 the first course of university lectures in the German tongue, and about the same time published a German monthly journal, *Scherz- und ernsthafte, vernünfftige und einfältige Gedanken über allerhand lustige und nützliche Bücher und Fragen*.

Greater than Thomasius was his younger fellow-townsmen, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716), the first German philosopher whose influence was European. Leibniz's historical significance is due to the fact that he definitely destroyed the formal philosophic systems of the mediæval schools. His own system, which he expounded in Latin and French treatises (*Nouveaux essais sur l'entendement humain*, 1704; *Essais de Théodicée sur la bonté de Dieu, la liberté de l'homme et l'origine du mal*, 1710, and *Monadologie*, 1714), was based on the results arrived at by Locke in England and Bayle in France; but Leibniz attacked the problems from a less materialistic standpoint. The dualism between matter and spirit, which the philosophy of the eighteenth century attempted again and again to bridge over, was explained in Leibniz's system by an ingenious hypothesis of pre-established harmony between the two; matter consisted, according to him, of so-called "monads," which were not merely endowed individually with the qualities of matter, but had at the same time a certain spiritual potency. In his native tongue Leibniz wrote but little, but he advocated its use with persistency and warmth—notably in his *Unvorgreifliche Gedanken betreffend die Ausübung und Verbesserung der deutschen Sprache* (1697)—and was one of the chief founders of the Berlin Academy in 1700. He laid, one might say, the basis of modern German culture; above all, he gave the German "Aufklärung" its characteristically optimistic tone. He was not, however, a practical thinker who reacted immediately on his nation or its literature; that was the work of his successor, Christian Wolff (1679-1754), who, as professor in Halle, carried on and completed the rationalistic movement inaugurated by Thomasius and Leibniz. Without the originality of either of these men, Wolff possessed a remarkably practical mind; he reduced the new philosophy to a system (*Vernünfftige Gedanken von Gott, der Welt und der Seele des Menschen*, 1720), and by virtue of his immediate appeal to his time became pre-eminently, as Hegel said, the "teacher of the Germans."

The philosophic movement contributed in no small degree towards bringing England and Germany closer together at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century. And it was not unnatural that the first avenue by which English influence found its way to the continent should have passed through Hamburg. North German philosophers and theologians had been constantly drawing attention to how much Germany had to learn from England, and the younger literary generation in Hamburg soon followed up their suggestions. The way was prepared by a satirist of no mean gifts, Christian Wernigke (1661-1725), who brought the Hamburg poets of Hofmannswaldau's school into discredit. His best epigrams, indeed, are hardly inferior to those of Logau in the previous century. And in Hamburg were born two poets who shared the honour of introducing English literary ideas into German poetry, and laying the foundation for the new literary movement. These were Barthold Heinrich Brockes (1680-1747) and Friedrich von Hagedorn (1708-54). The former, who began in the school of Hofmannswaldau, has small intrinsic worth as a poet; he came, however, at an early date under the influence of Pope's pastorals, and found in this model a congenial vehicle for his own passionate love of nature. His original poetry began to appear in 1721 under the title *Irdisches Vergnügen in Gott*, of which by 1748 nine volumes had appeared. There is little that is inspired in these volumes, but Brockes's enthusiasm leavened all that came after; he achieved what his English contemporary Thomson, whose *Seasons* he translated, had achieved in England: he emancipated the senses, and voiced the growing enthusiasm for nature.

Hagedorn is in every respect a greater poet than Brockes, but it may be questioned if his influence was proportionate to his merits. He, too, came under English influence, for he had lived for several years in London as secretary to the Danish embassy, and in later life he kept in constant touch with England. But the poets who attracted him in England were rather those

who had been schooled in French classicism than the pioneers of naturalism. Apart from the lesson of form and style—and this lesson must not be underrated—Hagedorn had little to give to German poetry that was vital to its progress. He had a sunny, happy nature, which revelled in the light social tone of the anacreontic, as it was cultivated in France at this time; and in his admirable *Fabeln und Erzählungen* (1738-50), he proved himself a worthy German successor of Lafontaine.

English literature first became widely popular in Germany with the introduction of the English weekly journal on the model of the *Tatler*, *Spectator*, and *Guardian*. Here, again, Hamburg led the way. As early as 1713, *Der Vernünftler* had appeared there, a periodical which consisted mainly of translations from the English weeklies. In the years 1721-23 Bodmer and Breitinger published their *Diskurse der Maler* in Zürich, while Gottsched also copied the English models in *Die vernünftigen Tadlerinnen* (1725-26) and *Der Biedermann* (1727). The best example of the German "moralische Wochenschrift" is, however, *Der Patriot*, which appeared in Hamburg between 1724 and 1726. This form of literature took even a firmer hold upon the German people than upon the English, and continued popular on the continent until long past the middle of the eighteenth century. In England the moral weekly was a testimony to the rising influence of the middle classes, but in Germany it had at the same time a very definite mission: it became the accepted organ of popular education, the vehicle by means of which the Wolfian philosophy was rendered palatable to the nation at large.

Hardly less influential than the *Spectator* was another great English book in the early years of the eighteenth century, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). While in England the significantly modern note in this novel was at once recognised, the continent saw in it rather the culmination of the form of romance which had dominated European literature in the seventeenth century. Germany especially regarded it as the development of a

kind of story, of which she had already had an example in the latter part of *Stiefkindchen*. *Robinson Crusoe* was at once translated into German, and within a very few years had called forth an extraordinary flood of imitations. We find not merely a *Teutscher Robinson*, a *Frantzösischer Robinson*, but every country in Germany had its own *Robinson*—*Die Swiss Family Robinson*, by J. R. Wyss, which is still familiar to us, dates from the beginning of the nineteenth century; the list includes further a *Geistlicher Robinson* and a *Medizinischer Robinson*, and even a *Jungfer Robinsonin*; but many of these, it ought in fairness to be added, are only "Robinsonaden" in name. Best of all is *Die Insel Felsenburg*, written by J. G. Schnabel, and published in four volumes between 1731 and 1743. Here the motives familiar from Defoe's romance are weakened by repetition and over-emphasis; the author is more intent on demonstrating the rise of an ideal state under the conditions of nature than in depicting, like Defoe, the realistic struggle of man against nature's powers. But the novel is written graphically and vividly and—as modernised by Tieck in Germany and Oehlenschläger in Denmark—it maintained its popularity until late in the nineteenth century.

As in Reformation times, Switzerland responded most quickly to this stimulus from without; and the gospel of naturalism which came from England, soon found enthusiastic adherents there. Among the pioneers of the new literature, Albrecht von Haller is usually regarded as the Swiss complement of Hagedorn; but Haller, who was born at Bern in 1708 and died in 1777, was much more a poet of the coming time than his Hamburg contemporary. His writings have none of the winning grace of Hagedorn's verse, but his two didactic poems, *Die Alpen* and *Über den Ursprung des Rheins*, both published for the first time in the second edition of his *Versuch schweizerischer Gedichte* (1734), reveal a grander imagination than Hagedorn possessed; and his appreciation for nature in her wilder and sterner moods, struck a new note in the continental literature of the eighteenth cen-

tury. In his old age Haller wrote novels with didactic tendencies (*Usona*, 1771; *Alfred, König der Angelsachsen*, 1773), and, as professor in Göttingen, was one of the leading anatomists and physiologists of his century.

It was from Switzerland, too, that the movement emanated before which Gottsched and pseudo-classicism ultimately succumbed in Germany. This movement was also English, for its theory was based on the *Spectator*, its practice on Milton. Gottsched's principal Swiss opponents, Johann Jakob Bodmer (1698-1783) and Johann Jakob Breitinger (1701-76), were theorists and scholars rather than poets; the latter, indeed, restricted himself entirely to criticism, and Bodmer's original poetry, his epics, such as *Noah* (1750), hardly detract from the truth of this statement. In later years Bodmer helped to awaken interest in German mediæval literature with a modernisation of the *Nibelungenlied* (*Chriemhilden Rache*, 1757) and with his collection of the Minnesinger (1758-59). The two friends began their joint activity in 1721 in the journal already mentioned, *Die Diskurse der Maler*, and in 1732 Bodmer published a prose translation of *Paradise Lost*, prefaced by a short eulogy of the English poet and his rhymeless verse. Gottsched in Leipzig did not altogether approve of this, but it was not until Breitinger published his *Kritische Dichtkunst*, and Bodmer his *Kritische Abhandlung von der Wunderbaren in der Poesie* in 1740, that the actual quarrel with the leader of French taste broke out. In 1741 Bodmer followed up his treatise with a second, *Betrachtungen über die poetischen Gemälde der Dichter*. At first sight, it would not seem as if there was much room for antagonism between the two parties, and, indeed, in the essentials of poetic theory both sides were fairly well agreed. The real point at issue was whether, as Gottsched insisted, reason should be the dominating force in poetic creation, or, as his opponents said, imagination: Gottsched believed in the poet submitting himself to certain artificial laws deduced from classic writers: Bodmer and Breitinger, while by no means despising laws, left room for the poet to exercise



more freely his imagination. This explains why the hottest part of the controversy centred in the question as to how far the "miraculous" was a legitimate element in poetic expression.

The battle had not raged long before it was evident that Gottsched's cause was lost ; not that his adversaries were superior to him, for he and his henchmen were intellectually, and even as poets, more than a match for the Zürich party, but the spirit of the age was against him. Bodmer and Breitinger triumphed, and with them the influence of English literature, not because they fought particularly well, but because the day of undiluted and unmodified pseudo-classicism was over.

## CHAPTER XI.

## SAXON AND PRUSSIAN LITERARY CIRCLES; KLOPSTOCK.

IN the present chapter we have to consider the condition of German literature in the years subsequent to the decisive controversy between Gottsched and the Swiss in 1740 and 1741. The immediate effect of Gottsched's defeat was naturally most noticeable among his own friends and disciples in Leipzig, the young men who had helped him to translate French dramas and Bayle's *Dictionary*. These writers, although not openly disloyal to Gottsched, were influenced by the new ideas, and felt the need of a more liberal organ than the *Belustigungen des Verstandes und des Witzes*, in which their contributions had hitherto appeared; and in 1744 they founded a new monthly, which, owing to the fact that it was published in Bremen, was called the *Bremer Beiträge* (1744-48). Of the writers of this circle, K. C. Gärtner (1712-91), J. A. Cramer (1723-88), J. Adolf Schlegel (1721-93)—father of the brothers Schlegel who became the chief critics of the Romantic School—and J. A. Ebert (1723-95), who translated extensively from the English, are of small importance; but four members of the group, Elias Schlegel, Zachariä, Rabener, and Gellert, deserve more detailed consideration.

Although not perhaps the most talented, Johann Elias Schlegel (1719-49), whose promising career was cut short at the age of thirty, meant most for the future development of German poetry. His alexandrine tragedies (*Hermann*, 1743; *Canut*, 1747) were the most original.

that the school produced, and his comedies (*Die stumme Schönheit*, 1747; *Der Triumph der guten Frauen*, 1748) the best to be seen on the German stage before Lessing, with the possible exception of an admirable local comedy of Hamburg life, *Der Bookesbeutel* (1742), by Hinrich Borkenstein. In his dramaturgic theories Schlegel was distinctly a forerunner of Lessing; he recognised that the Greeks were worthier masters to imitate than the French; he discussed the establishment of a permanent national theatre, and had even a word to say in favour of Shakespeare, whose *Julius Cæsar* was, in 1741, translated into alexandrines by the Prussian ambassador in London, K. W. von Borck.

J. F. W. Zachariä (1726-77) helped, like Ebert, to introduce English literature into Germany—he translated Milton's *Paradise Lost* in 1760—but his tastes lay rather in the direction of English classicism than of the new literary ideals towards which Germany was blindly groping. He is remembered almost solely by his admirable comic epic *Der Renommist* (1744), which was modelled partly on Boileau's *Lutrin*, and partly on Pope's *Rape of the Lock*. The hero is a student who comes from the rough, unpolished university of Jena to Leipzig, the metropolis of good taste, where he falls under the charm of a Leipzig beauty, becomes himself a dandy, only to be laughed at and rejected by the lady for a more favoured townsman of her own. The argument of the poem is trite enough, but Zachariä gives an interesting glimpse into the Leipzig to which Lessing came as a student.

More gifted than Zachariä was Gottlieb Wilhelm Rabener (1714-71), who, educated at the school of St Afra in Meissen and at the university of Leipzig, became a revenue inspector at Leipzig and Dresden. His writings are not voluminous, being all comprised in four small volumes, *Sammlung satirischer Schriften*, which appeared between 1751 and 1755. Rabener is a prose satirist of a peculiarly gentle and harmless type; politics and the wider issues of social life he eschews altogether, and the

raillery which he expends on provincial vagaries and eccentricities is always mingled with a didactic desire to improve. His own genial personality is reflected in his satire, and his prose style has a charm unusual at so early a period. If Rabener was more humorist than satirist, C. L. Liscow (1701-60) was a satirist without much humour; his collection of *Satirische und ernsthafte Schriften* (1739) is more akin to the kind of writing we associate with Swift, but as his satire was for the most part directed against the obscurer writers of the day, it soon lost its interest. A. G. Kästner (1719-1800), professor of mathematics at Göttingen, has also to be mentioned here as a sharp-tongued and witty epigrammatist.

As far as popularity was concerned, the first place among the contributors to the *Bremer Beiträge* belongs to Christian Fürchtegott Gellert (1715-69). Educated, like Rabener, in Meissen and Leipzig, he became in 1744 a "privatdozent" and in 1751 professor in the university. As a teacher, his favourite theme was the relationship of literature and morals, and his moral guidance and advice was eagerly sought by all classes of people. His books found their way into circles where previously only the Bible and the hymn-book had been read; he taught the German middle classes what serious literature meant. Gellert is the typical product of the Wolffian philosophy as it manifested itself in literature; he realised better than any other man of his time the educative mission of literature which Wolff and Gottsched had at heart. As a playwright, Gellert wrote a few comedies—the best being perhaps *Das Los in der Lotterie* (1747)—which, without making pretensions to higher dramatic significance, reproduce faithfully the social life of the time; and in an academic address he advocated the imitation of the *comédie larmoyante* of Nivelle de la Chaussée, a type of play which, as will be seen, was all-important for the subsequent development of the German drama. In fiction, he was also a pioneer, for his one novel, *Leben der schwedischen Gräfin von G\*\*\** (1747-48), has the distinction of being the first German novel inspired by

Richardson. It is true, the result is of rather a hybrid character, Gellert being unable to dispense with the sensational elements of the older fiction; and, in spite of its sententiousness, his book can hardly be regarded as inculcating virtue. His didactic aims were more effectively realised in his collection of model letters (*Briefe, nebst einer praktischen Abhandlung von dem guten Geschmack in Briefen*, 1751), which were accepted as models for German letter-writing by more than one generation.

Gellert's greatest achievement, however, was his *Fabeln und Erzählungen* (1746-48), the only book of that time which still remains popular to-day. Grace and simplicity, not poetic insight or imagination, are the characteristics of Gellert's poetry. Lafontaine is his model, but he Germanises Lafontaine as completely as he had Germanised Richardson in his novel; his *milieu* is the unidealised daily life around him, and the didactic point of his story is carefully adjusted to German conditions. With his *Geistliche Oden und Lieder* (1757), again, he satisfied the religious needs of his contemporaries as in the earlier collection he had satisfied their poetic needs. It is, however, mainly as a fable-writer that Gellert is remembered, and he and Hagedorn supplied the models for the succeeding generation of fable-writers, of whom M. G. Lichtwer (1719-83) and G. K. Pfeffel (1736-1809) are worthy of mention. Lessing, on the other hand, whose *Fabeln* appeared in 1759, brought back the fable to the concrete, sharply focussed form of the ancients.

The *Bremer Beiträge* numbered amongst its contributors a greater writer than either Rabener or Gellert, but one who proved too strong for the school, whose first important contribution to the journal was disastrous to it. In the spring of 1748, cantos I.-III. of Klopstock's *Messias* were published in the *Beiträge* and opened a new era in German poetry. Before, however, turning to Klopstock it is necessary to look at the condition of literature in Prussia, and, above all, in the two centres, Halle and Berlin, in the early years of Frederick the Great's reign.

Although the headquarters of the opposing parties in the battle between classicism and naturalism were Leipzig and Zürich, Gottsched's enemies had an advance-post in much closer proximity, namely at Halle, where the new university, founded in 1694, already stood in the vanguard of German thought. Pietism and rationalism successively looked to Halle for guidance, and between 1735 and 1740, A. G. Baumgarten (1714-62) was a teacher in the university there; on the basis of the poetic theories of Bodmer and Breitinger, that thinker laid the foundations of a new department of philosophy—æsthetics. It was thus only natural that the students of Halle should have turned rather to Zürich than to Leipzig, and received the Swiss theories with more respect than Gottsched's.

Of the Halle or Prussian group of poets, the two oldest were Immanuel Jakob Pyra (1715-44) and Samuel Gotthold Lange (1711-81). The former, who died at the age of twenty-nine, was a warm admirer of Milton, whose influence is to be traced on all his poetry; while Lange attempted, with much less inspiration, to combine the fervid language of the Bible with the grace of the Horatian ode. In 1737 they wrote together in rhymeless verse, *Thyrsis und Damons freundschaftliche Lieder*, which, however, were not published until after Pyra's death in 1745. These *Lieder* were the immediate forerunners of Klopstock's lyric poetry.

The common tie which united the members of the younger group of Halle poets, Gleim, Uz, and Götz, was the anacreontic, a form of verse which had already been made popular by Hagedorn. J. W. L. Gleim (1719-1803), although but meagrely gifted, was a prominent literary personality of the eighteenth century; for he stood on an intimate footing with all the poets of his time. His home in Halberstadt was a goal of pilgrimage for many a young writer, who sought the advice and commendation of "Vater Gleim." His anacreontic *Scherzhafte Lieder* (1744-45) set the example to his younger colleagues, and his *Preussische Kriegslieder von einem Grenadier* (1758), written in the English ballad-metre of *Cherry Chase*, gave

him a reputation as a patriotic poet; but the *Kriegslieder* have little abiding worth; as Lessing said, the patriot's voice drowned the poet's. Gleim, however, owed his reputation solely to these songs; his other poetic work, his epics and imitations of the Minnesang, are long forgotten. The most gifted poet of the group was a native of Ansbach, Johann Peter Uz (1720-96), who also studied in Halle. He, too, cultivated the anacreontic, and gave it a formal beauty which bore testimony to his industrious study of Horace and the French *vers de société*; but it is in his philosophic poems that he displays to best advantage his peculiar poetic genius; here he is the successor of Haller and the direct forerunner of Schiller. Lastly, J. N. Gotz (1721-81), who came from Worms, had perhaps even more sense for poetic form than either Gleim or Uz, but his verses flowed too easily from his pen, and are, for the most part, trivial and ephemeral.

From Halle the literary movement inaugurated by these anacreontic poets spread to the Prussian capital, where it found in the French tastes of the court an even more favourable soil. Frederick the Great (1712-86) had a very small opinion of German literature; Gellert, indeed, was the only poet for whom he expressed his interest with any warmth, and when, in 1780, he himself wrote an essay of German literature (*De la littérature allemande*), he showed a complete misunderstanding for its national characteristics. But the very movement he condemned he had himself unwittingly called into existence and fostered; if German poetry, from Klopstock to Goethe, advanced by leaps and bounds, it was largely due to the confidence and the patriotism with which Frederick inspired his people; this French king, who spoke German with difficulty, and looked at Europe with the cosmopolitan eyes of the eighteenth-century *philosophe*, laid the foundations of that nationalism in German poetry which was to find its most vigorous expression in the anti-classic movement of "Sturm und Drang."

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realised in the poetry of Karl Wilhelm Ramler (1725-98), the "German Horace." Ramler's lyrics (*Lyrische Gedichte*, 1772), with their pedantic metrical correctness, their carefully studied decorum, were the embodiment of the severely classical ideals which the Prussian king would have liked to see transferred from French to German poetry. But these poems only appear to us now as cold and insincere imitations. In an age like this, which regarded the Horatian ode as the highest form of poetic expression, it was also little wonder that Anna Luise Karsch, or, according to the custom of the time, Karschin (1722-91), a protégée of Gleim's and Ramler's, should have been regarded as a "German Sappho." Frau Karsch, whose *Auserlesene Gedichte* were published in 1763, had a highly developed faculty of improvisation, but her talent was not strong enough to assert itself amidst the artificial tastes of her time.

Among the Frederician poets there was one, however, who caught a glimpse of higher things, an officer in Frederick's army, Ewald Christian von Kleist (1715-59). Kleist, too, had sat at Gleim's feet, and had begun by writing anacreontic verses; but poetry was too much a matter of the heart to him to allow him to be satisfied with mere exercises of ingenuity and wit. In 1749 he published *Der Frühling*, a fragment of a descriptive poem suggested by Thomson's *Seasons*. A greater contrast to the cold abstractions of the classic poetry of the time it would be hard to imagine. Kleist merely describes a walk in the country and his own delight in the beauties of nature; but spring is a veritable revelation to him, and he looks to nature as the healer of all human woes. What in Haller's *Alpen* had been tentative and not always convincing, has here become a passionate, heartfelt gospel. In 1757 and 1758 Kleist was in Leipzig, where he was the intimate friend of Lessing; and to those years belong the finely polished *Ode an die preussische Armee* and the short epic *Cissides und Paches*. In August 1759 he was severely wounded in the battle of Kunersdorf, and died before assistance could reach him; to himself fell



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the honour he had extolled in his poetry, a soldier's death for his country.

The leading poet of this epoch, the poet who realised what so many had been blindly groping after, the fulfilment alike of the critical and poetical demands of the time, was Klopstock. Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock was born at Quedlinburg on July 2, 1724, and educated at Schulpforta, where he already planned and began his epic on the life of Christ. In 1745 he went to Jena to study theology, and here, following the example of Bodmer in his translation of Milton, he completed the first three cantos of *Der Messias* in prose. In the following year he exchanged Jena for Leipzig, where, at Gottsched's suggestion, he turned his poem into hexameters, and in this form the three cantos appeared in the *Bremer Beiträge* in 1748. Meanwhile a number of fervid odes to Leipzig friends (collected under the title *Wingolf*) had given Klopstock a reputation as a lyric poet; and in 1748, as tutor at Langensalza in Thuringia, he fell in love with a cousin who inspired the odes to "Fanny." Bodmer, one of Klopstock's first and warmest admirers, invited him to visit Zürich in 1750. The Swiss critic, however, was only prepared to find in Klopstock the religious poet, and when the latter revealed himself as not at all averse to worldly pleasures, Bodmer's warmth cooled off. After nearly seven months in Switzerland, Klopstock received an invitation from the Danish king, Frederick V., to settle in Copenhagen and finish the *Messias* there. On the journey north he met in Hamburg his future wife, Margarete or Meta Möller, whom he married in 1754. With the exception of a two years' break, Copenhagen remained Klopstock's home until 1770, when he retired to Hamburg. His death took place in 1803.

The composition of *Der Messias* covers a very wide period of German literature, the last cantos not appearing until 1773, the year that saw the establishment of the movement known as "Sturm und Drang." In spite of its twenty cantos and nearly twenty thousand verses, the

poem treats but a small section of Christ's life, beginning with the ascent of the Mount of Olives. The action, however, is not limited to events that take place on earth; the heavenly hosts play as large a part in the poem as the earthly personages. In this respect Klopstock was only following the traditional method of the religious epic as he had found it exemplified in Milton; but while in the grandiose sweep of his imagination Klopstock yielded to none of his predecessors, he was entirely deficient in dramatic qualities, and in the power of giving individual life to his characters. Thus *Der Messias* is an epic not of action, but of feelings; not of characters, but of sentiment; it has, as has been well said, more affinity with the lyric oratorios of Händel than with *Paradise Lost*. Even those features of Klopstock's poem that appeal most to us to-day, its lofty imagery, its grandiose imaginative flights, its constant appeal to the sense of wonder, pall on the reader after a few thousand lines—palled, it must be admitted, on the poet himself before he reached the end. The inspiration grows scantier and scantier as the poem approaches its close, and it was only with difficulty that Klopstock rose to a culmination at all; the opening episodes have more of the sublime than the closing scenes, where Christ takes His place on the right hand of God. German literature had advanced too rapidly for Klopstock; he was left behind long before his life-work was completed, and he instinctively felt it. What had been a daring innovation in 1748, was in 1773 regarded as old-fashioned by the younger generation that pinned its faith to the theatre.

After all, it is not as an epic poet, but as a lyric poet—even in his epic—that Klopstock marked an epoch in literary history; the great achievements of German poetry in the eighteenth century are conceivable without the preparation of the *Messias*, but hardly without that of Klopstock's *Oden*, of which the first collected edition appeared in 1771. These poems fall into several groups which show the poet's growth more clearly than the successive cantos of the epic. In the earliest of them, the

poems written in Leipzig, Klopstock already shows himself in advance of his friends; in freeing the lyric from the artificial restraint of rhyme, so dear to the anacreontic singers, Klopstock at the same time asserted the right of poetry to express purely personal and individual feelings. The antique metres, which he put in the place of the simple rhymed metres, were un-German enough, but the form was of little account compared with the fact that here, for the first time for centuries, German feelings were expressed with sincerity and free from artificial conventions. Klopstock sang of religion, of love—passionately in the songs to his cousin, more contemplatively in those to his future wife; he sang, in old English measures, patriotic songs, which are much superior to Gleim's artificial jingles; his enthusiasm for the Germanic past inspired another group of odes, and his disappointed hopes of what the French Revolution was to achieve for the world, still another. But whatever his theme, the lyric which it inspired was, in the best sense, German and national.

Klopstock has to be discussed in a third capacity: as a dramatist. He is the author of six plays, three on religious story (*Der Tod Adams*, 1757; *Salomo*, 1764; *David*, 1772), three forming a trilogy on the life of Germany's first patriot, Hermann or Arminius (1769-87). The latter, which Klopstock called "Bardiete" from "barditus," a word used by Tacitus, had been inspired by that enthusiasm for national antiquity due to Macpherson's *Ossian*. A translation of *Ossian* was published in 1764, and appealed with even greater force to the German imagination than the original to the English. Besides Klopstock, the leading German "bards," as the imitators of *Ossian* liked to call themselves, were H. W. von Gerstenberg (1737-1823), who, with his *Gedicht eines Skalden* (1766), inaugurated the German movement, K. F. Kretschmann (1738-1809), the author of an empty, rhetorical *Gesang Rhingulfs des Barden, als Varus geschlagen war* (1768), and, most gifted of the three, Michael Denis (1729-1800), an

Austrian, who was largely instrumental in introducing North German ideas and poetry into Austria; his poems appeared under the characteristic title *Lieder Sineds* (an anagram of Denis) *des Barden* in 1772. The "bardic" movement was, however, short-lived; it was a plant without roots, and soon withered in the fierce light of the "Sturm und Drang"; but it awakened the nation's interest in its own past, and prepared the way for a truer patriotic poetry at a later date; its most immediate successors were the group of poets known as the "Göttinger Dichterbund."

One more writer of the age of Klopstock has to be mentioned, a writer somewhat difficult to class, Salomon Gessner (1730-88). Gessner was a Swiss who spent some years learning the trade of a bookseller in Berlin, where he came into touch with the literary world. But Berlin was not congenial to his quiet, retiring, nature-loving temperament, and in literature as in life he went his own way. In 1756 appeared his first collection of prose *Idyllen*, which had been preceded by a pastoral romance, *Daphnis* (1754), and were followed by a prose epic, *Der Tod Aels* (1758). These were the most popular German books, not only in Germany but in Europe, before the appearance of Goethe's *Werther*. Gessner was a lyric poet hardly less gifted in his way than Klopstock: but the power of expression in verse was denied to him. His poetry shows a strange mingling of two widely different epochs: the artificial rococo of the Renaissance is infused with a fervid love of nature, for which Gessner always finds the aptest and most delicate poetic expression. He lived in an ideal, unreal world, in which poetry and nature were one.

## CHAPTER XII.

## LESSING.

WHILE Klopstock was modern Germany's first national poet of genius, Lessing was her first writer whose significance was European. In a higher degree than any other author of his time, Lessing was the incarnation of the best spirit of the eighteenth century; as a poet, as a critic, as a philosopher, and as a theologian, he is a rationalist in the best sense of that word. He is to Germany what Voltaire is to France, but with the difference that while Voltaire's work, coming with its scathing satire and witty frivolity after the most brilliant epoch in French letters, may be compared with the satyr-play which closed the Greek trilogy, Lessing's is the serious prologue to the classical epoch of German literature.

Born at Kamenz in the Oberlausitz in Saxony, on January 22, 1729, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing was educated at the Fürstenschule of St Afra in Meissen, and matriculated in 1746 as a student of theology in Leipzig. Although he was not actually a member of the circle of writers who contributed to the *Bremer Beiträge*, his early plays, such as *Der junge Gelehrte* (1747), *Der Freigeist* (1749), *Die Juden* (1749), and the epigrams and anacreontics of his *Kleinigkeiten* (1751), have little to distinguish them from the productions of the Leipzig group. Thus one might say that Lessing virtually began his literary career in the train of Gottsched.

In Leipzig his chief ambition, as he once wrote to his father, had been to be a "German Molière"; in

Berlin, where, except for a few months spent at Wittenberg in the beginning of 1752, he lived from the end of 1748 to 1755, he seems to have set his heart on being Germany's Voltaire. In the literary supplement which he edited for the *Berlinische privilegierte Zeitung*, or *Vossische Zeitung*, he attracted attention by the force and decision of his criticism, and still more by his *Vademecum für Herrn Sam. Gotth. Lange*, (1754), a trenchant attack on Lange, the Halle poet and translator of Horace. Quite in the spirit of Voltaire was Lessing's series of *Rettungen* (1753-54), "vindications" of authors who, in his opinion, had, for theological or other reasons, been misjudged. In two short-lived quarterlies, *Beiträge zur Historie und Aufnahme des Theaters* (1750) and *Theatralische Bibliothek* (1754-58), he carried on the work begun by Elias Schlegel, preparing the way for a serious German drama and serious dramatic criticism. It is, however, rather the wide catholicity of Lessing's views than any marked originality that characterises these journals; and following Voltaire and Diderot, he turned his attention to the English drama and arrived ultimately at the conclusion that Germany had more to learn from England than from France.



rate her from Mellefont. Meanwhile Sampson arrives and is willing to forgive his daughter; whereupon Marwood poisons Sara, and Mellefont kills himself with Marwood's dagger. Not only the scene and the characters of this lachrymose tragedy are English; the technique is English too. The most conspicuously German contribution is the tendency to allow the interest in feelings and emotions to override what to the English playwright was more important, that in the moral purpose. *Miss Sara Sampson* is not a great play; even Lessing's contemporaries soon discovered its weaknesses, but with it the German drama made a great stride forwards.

Independently of Lessing, however, German dramatic literature was making steady progress. When Lessing returned to Leipzig after the production of *Miss Sara*, he found the theatre in a much more promising condition than when he had lived there seven years before. Two writers in particular interested him, both of whom were unfortunately cut off at an early age, namely J. F. von Cronegk (1731-58), author of a prize tragedy, *Codrus*, and an unfinished play, *Olint und Sophronia*, and J. W. von Brawe (1738-58), who, under Lessing's influence, wrote a tragedy in blank verse, *Brutus*, and an excellent "bürgerliche Tragödie" in prose, *Der Freigeist*. Another friend of Lessing's, C. F. Weisse (1726-1804), had more success as a playwright; he adapted to the popular taste of the day the ideals of more ambitious writers, and wrote an easy, fluent dialogue superior to that of Gellert and his friends. He translated and adapted *Richard III.* in alexandrines, converted *Romeo and Juliet* into a "bürgerliche Tragödie," and acclimatised English and French operettas on the German stage. Lessing himself soon left the crude realism of *Miss Sara Sampson* behind him in the fine one-act tragedy *Philotas* (1759) and in the fragment of a drama of *Faust* (1759).

Meanwhile, in conjunction with two Berlin friends, Moses Mendelssohn and C. F. Nicolai, Lessing had established the *Briefe, die neueste Literatur betreffend*

(1759-65), in which, for the first time, he rose to his full height as a literary critic. Moses Mendelssohn (1729-86) was a thinker of originality and insight, and the first of the so-called "Popularphilosophen." In his most popular work, *Phädon* (1767), he helped to spread the ideas of the "Aufklärung," making them more generally palatable by a superficial varnish of Greek philosophy. In collaboration with Mendelssohn, Lessing wrote the prize-essay *Pope ein Metaphysiker!* (1755). C. F. Nicolai (1733-1811) was a Berlin bookseller, whose obdurate adherence throughout his long life to the narrow rationalism of his youth, caused him to be regarded by a younger generation as the representative of all that was shallow in literature and as the antagonist of progress. But his religious novel *Sebaldu Nothanker* (1773-75), and his popular *Beschreibung einer Reise durch Deutschland und die Schweiz* (1783) were regarded as advanced works in their day.

In the fifty-four letters which Lessing contributed to the *Literaturbriefe* he showed himself to be a critic without a rival among his contemporaries. The clear and impartial judgment which had already been conspicuous in his early criticism is here still more marked; the leading phenomena of German literature are passed in review, and poets like Wieland and Klopstock judged with a finality which posterity has hardly needed to revise. Here, too, Lessing has at last come to clearness with himself about Shakespeare, and, abandoning Voltaire's views of the English poet, he boldly pronounces him to be a more faithful observer of the Aristotelian laws of the drama than the French tragic poets of the seventeenth century. Before such incisive and convincing criticism one is tempted to say that the critical method of the eighteenth century—that is to say, the method of sitting in judgment on poetry and art from an assumedly superior standpoint, which held its own in Europe until long after the Romantic School had set up new ideals—touches in Lessing its highest point.

The *Literary Letters* were occupied for the most part with

books, with the facts of literary history; in his next two critical works, Lessing discussed the principles of æsthetics and the theory of criticism. These were the *Laokoon* and the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*. In the former of these, Lessing is associated with one of the master-minds of the age, Johann Joachim Winkelmann (1717-68). Compared with Lessing, Winkelmann was a more naïve type of genius; he seemed an ancient Greek born by accident into a world of artificial pseudo-classicism: to him the true understanding for the antique, which Lessing only arrived at slowly by a process of self-education, came, we might say, natural. His monumental *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums* (1764) is one of the great books of the eighteenth century, and laid the foundations on which the whole modern study of the history of art is built up. In an earlier booklet, *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Mahlerei und Bildhauerkunst* (1755), Winkelmann had expressed the opinion that the characteristic of Greek masterpieces was "a noble simplicity and a calm grandeur, both in posture and expression." This thought brought order into a train of ideas which had long occupied Lessing's mind, and which now found expression in *Laokoon, oder über die Grenzen der Malerei und Poesie* (1766). Lessing's sharp analytical mind discovered the logical weakness in Winkelmann's interpretation as applied to the *Laokoon* group; he pointed out that the superiority of the sculptor's *Laokoon* to Virgil's description of Laokoon's death was not necessarily a superiority at all. It was rather a question of two entirely different arts, the methods of which were different. The medium of the sculptor or painter, he showed, was space, that of the poet, time; the painter depicts objects in juxtaposition, the poet in sequence. From this observation he proceeded to define the boundaries of the various arts, especially that of poetry, which in the descriptions of nature so popular at that time had been unduly encroaching on the province of the painter. The influence of this book was, as of all Lessing's works, immediate and decisive; it counteracted the growing

fondness for descriptive writing, and removed obstacles which were impeding the advance of German poetry.

The *Laokoon* is a fragment. Lessing had the intention of publishing a second volume in which the æsthetic basis of the drama would probably have been discussed. Many new problems in dramatic art, similar to those which he had attacked in his *Laokoon*, were forcing themselves on his attention: the definition of tragedy and the validity of Aristotle; the delimitation of comedy, tragi-comedy, "domestic" drama; the province of the actor's art. Moreover, just at this time C. W. von Gluck (1714-87) was evolving in his operas a new type of drama analogous to that of the Greeks; his *Orfeo ed Euridice* (1762) and *Alceste* (1767) could not but have interested the author of the *Laokoon*: and Gluck's later operas, *Iphigénie en Aulide* (1774) and *Iphigénie en Tauride* (1779), probably still more. These interesting questions of dramatic theory, which might have found a place in the second part of the *Laokoon*, were reserved for the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* (1767-68).

This work was a periodical commentary on the work of the Hamburg National Theatre, which had been founded by several Hamburg citizens in 1767, and to which Lessing was appointed critic and literary adviser. The unsatisfactory repertory of the theatre, the financial difficulties which weighed heavily on it from the beginning, and the unwillingness of the actors to subordinate themselves to higher artistic ideals soon compelled Lessing to withdraw from any immediate connection with the undertaking, and to regard the performances merely as an occasion for expressing his own views on literary and dramaturgic matters. The *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* contains the ripest opinions which eighteenth-century classicism attained to on the subject of the drama; in persistent antagonism to Voltaire, Lessing completed what Voltaire had begun, just as, in earlier years, in conflict with Gottsched he advanced the classic movement which Gottsched had inaugurated. He denied, with perhaps greater zeal than judgment, the merits of French

classic tragedy, and pinned his faith to Sophocles and Shakespeare, the greatness of these poets being measured by the theories of Aristotle. In Lessing's eyes the drama of all time stood or fell according to the Greek critic's laws, and a large part of the *Dramaturgie* is devoted to an elucidation of Aristotle. It is, however, significant of Lessing's wideness of view that he has also something to say of the drama of Spain.

As twelve years before, Lessing's theory was accompanied and followed by practice. The critical standpoint of the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* is illustrated and exemplified by his own three ripest dramas, *Minna von Barnhelm, oder das Soldatenglück* (1767), *Emilia Galotti* (1772), and *Nathan der Weise* (1779).

*Minna von Barnhelm* is Germany's first national comedy; it embodies as no comedy had attempted to do before in German literature, the events, the ideas, and the atmosphere of its time; it was, as Goethe well said, the truest product of the Seven Years' War. Neither, however, the motives nor the situations of the drama are specifically German; it abounds in analogies to the European comedy of the earlier eighteenth century, from Farquhar's *Beaux' Stratagem* to Voltaire's *L'Écosaise*. Major von Tellheim has been discharged from the army under circumstances which reflect on his good name, and his sense of honour forbids him to hold Minna von Barnhelm, a Saxon heiress, to her engagement with him. Accompanied by her maid, Franziska, and her uncle—who, however, does not appear until the close—she comes to Berlin and alights at the same inn where Tellheim has taken up his quarters; indeed, she is the unwitting cause of Tellheim being turned out of his room by the avaricious landlord. Tellheim moves to another inn, leaving the landlord a ring as payment of his debt. The landlord shows the ring to Minna, who recognises it and advances the required sum on it. In an interview with the major, Minna endeavours to show him that his ideas of honour are exaggerated, but without success; so she has recourse to strategy. She leads Tellheim to believe that, owing to

her engagement with a Prussian officer, she has been disinherited by her uncle. This brings him at once to her feet, but it is now her turn to stand upon her dignity; she refuses to be a burden to him and returns him his ring, this being, as he discovers afterwards, the ring she had redeemed from the landlord. A letter arrives from the king exonerating Tellheim from all blame and reinstating him in his position.

While *Minna von Barnhelm* has retained its vitality as a stage play longer than any other of Lessing's dramas, *Emilia Galotti* stands more immediately in the line of national development. For it has, on the one hand, much in common with the "bürgerliche Tragödie" which Lessing himself introduced from England, and on the other, it is the connecting link between that form of drama and the drama of the "Sturm und Drang." Its strength lies in its clearly cut figures, especially the crafty chamberlain, Marinelli, and the Gräfin Orsini; its weakness in the attempt to adapt to the mental horizon of the eighteenth century an essentially antique theme. *Emilia Galotti* is virtually the Roman story of Virginia. The scene is laid at an Italian court. The Prince of Guastalla loves Emilia who is on the point of being married to a Graf Appiani. The prince's chamberlain, Marinelli, arranges a plot to frustrate this union. The carriage containing the young count, Emilia, and her mother, is waylaid near a country residence of the prince's; the count is shot and Emilia rescued from her alleged robbers and carried to the prince's residence. Her father, Odoardo, learns of the prince's nefarious designs, and, rather than let his daughter fall into his hands, he stabs her like a second Virginus.

The stormy conflicts which had raged round Lessing's head for the best part of his life, increased in intensity towards its close; he never ceased to fight for that spiritual freedom, which had always seemed to him the end and aim of the "education of humanity." A controversy on antiquarian subjects with C. A. Klotz, an authority on such subjects in Halle, resulted in the *Briefe*

*antiquarischen Inhalts* (1768-69) and the beautiful little study on *Wie die Alten den Tod gebildet* (1769). In 1773 he began to publish under the title *Zur Geschichte und Literatur*, forgotten or undiscovered treasures from the Ducal library of Wolfenbüttel, of which he had, in 1770, been appointed keeper. He took the opportunity of including in this series some fragments by a writer whose name was not disclosed until forty years later—H. S. Reimarus (1694-1768)—in which the facts of Christian origins were subjected to a rationalistic investigation. This was the signal for another and the last and bitterest attack of all; the German theological world, with the chief pastor of Hamburg, J. M. Goeze, at its head, rose up against Lessing. To find another theological controversy carried on with such acrimony, one would have to go back to Reformation times; and even the Reformation has hardly anything more vigorous and trenchant to point to than Lessing's *Eine Duplik*, *Eine Parabel*, *Axiomata*, and eleven *Anti-Goeze* (1778). Meanwhile Lessing's life had been clouded by personal suffering; his marriage with Eva König in 1776 awakens in us a personal interest in an author who, more than any other of his century, lives as a purely intellectual force; and that interest is deepened into sympathy by the tragic bereavement which left Lessing a widower in little over a year.

Lessing emerged, purified and chastened by his trials and conflicts, and a mild beauty lies over the crowning achievements of his career, the noble *Ernst und Falk: Gespräche für Freimaurer* (1778), *Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts* (1780), that concentration of Lessing's evolutionary idealism, and the drama of *Nathan der Weise* (1779). In form, a development under the influence of Diderot of the philosophic drama of Voltaire, *Nathan der Weise* stands aside from the main movement of German dramatic literature, which, in 1779, was, one might say, seething in the cauldron of Shakespearean "Sturm und Drang." But *Nathan* has to be judged, less as a drama for the theatre, than as an embodiment of Lessing's own lofty dreams of humanity and wise tolerance.

There is little plot in it, and not much dramatic movement. What there is, is built up round a fable which Lessing found in Boccaccio's *Decameron*. Nathan the wise Jew is summoned before the Mohammedan Saladin and asked to pronounce judgment as to which of the three religions, Christianity, Judaism, or Mohammedanism, is the true one; and he tells a story of three rings. A certain man possesses a ring of magic power, which renders all who believe in its virtue pleasing to God and to men. He has three sons, whom he loves equally well, and in order not to enrich one at the expense of the other, he has two rings made exactly like the genuine one. At the father's death the sons dispute as to who possesses the true ring—just as Christian, Jew, and Mohammedan dispute regarding the true religion—and the wise judge advises each of them to believe his ring to be the true one and live and act accordingly. Lessing invented as a framework to this anecdote a story which makes excessive demands on our credulity. The Jew's adopted daughter Recha turns out to be of Christian birth, and sister of the Knight Templar who has rescued her from fire and loves her, while Saladin is discovered ultimately to be their uncle. Thus the mutual tolerance and respect which Lessing wished to see in the different religions, is emphasised by family ties between the representatives of these religions. The plot of *Nathan der Weise* is artificial to the point of absurdity, its characters are too theoretically conceived, and its verse is often prosaic and wanting in dignity; but it is none the less the greatest literary product of the German "Aufklärung," and the first important play written in blank verse. It pointed out to Schiller the way by which the German drama was to be raised from "Sturm und Drang" realism to higher things.

Lessing himself did not long survive the death of his wife; he died in 1781, the year which saw the publication of the crowning achievement of the movement of enlightenment with which Lessing himself was most closely associated, Kant's *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*.



## CHAPTER XIII.

## WIELAND AND HERDER: THE GÖTTINGER DICHTERBUND.

LIKE Lessing, Wieland was also one of Germany's intellectual liberators, but a liberator of a different kind. While Lessing freed Germany from a false classicism and a stultifying dogmatism, Wieland freed her from the opposite extreme—from the unbridled revelling in sentiment and emotion, which came in the train of Klopstock and Rousseau; Lessing's antidote was the art, the criticism, and the poetry of ancient Greece, Wieland's the lighter literature of the Romance peoples.

Christoph Martin Wieland was born near Biberach in Wurtemberg on September 5, 1733. His early education and the influences under which he grew up were pervaded by pietism, and his own early writings were modelled on those of Klopstock and Bodmer; like Klopstock, he spent several months in Zürich as the guest of Bodmer. Here he adapted himself more successfully to what Bodmer expected of him, and he obtained a tutorship which kept him in Zürich for five years. In 1760 he settled in Biberach as director of the chancellery; and a Graf von Stadion, whose seat was in the neighbourhood, introduced him to a new literary world which was much more to his taste than the pietistic atmosphere of Zürich; he borrowed from the Graf's library the works of the English deists, the French encyclopædists, and Voltaire, and studied the poetry of Ariosto and Prior. Greek antiquity took the place of the misty, elegiac world of Klopstock. Voltaire won his interest, however, for Shakespeare,

the majority of whose *Theatralische Werke* he translated between 1762 and 1766. Meanwhile he had already experimented himself as a dramatist with plays drawn from English sources, *Lady Johanna Gray* (1758) and *Clementina von Poretta* (1760); and in 1764 appeared his first important work of fiction, *Der Sieg der Natur über die Schwärmerei, oder die Abenteuer des Don Sylvio von Rosalva*,—a novel in which the hero, after the manner of a Don Quixote, goes out into the world to discover the fairies in whose existence he firmly believes. Wieland here reveals himself as the cynical rationalist who laughs at his own earlier enthusiasms and superstitions. The same spirit, still more frivolously cynical, is to be seen in his *Komische Erzählungen* in verse (1765).

A more ambitious and serious novel followed in 1766-67, *Die Geschichte des Agathon*. In this work Wieland unrolls, against that antique background to which he remained more or less faithful throughout his career, the history of his own spiritual development. The plot is indifferently constructed, but in laying the chief emphasis on the psychological development of his hero, Wieland adapted to German fiction the methods of Richardson, and created the first important German novel on modern lines, a forerunner of *Wilhelm Meister*. In 1769 Wieland was professor of philosophy at the University of Erfurt, where he remained until 1772, when he was called to Weimar by the Duchess, to be tutor to her two sons, Karl August and Konstantin. Weimar remained Wieland's home until his death in 1813. As editor of the *Teutsche Merkur* (1773-89), he occupied a commanding position in German letters, and most of his own works were published for the first time in this periodical. Tales in light, easily flowing verse followed each other in rapid succession (*Musarion*, 1768; *Gandalin*, 1776; *Geron der Adlige*, 1777); the didactic novel, *Der goldene Spiegel, oder die Könige von Scheschian* (1772), half fiction, half political treatise, which had commended him to the Duchess of Weimar, was followed by the entertaining satire, *Die Abderiten* (1774), in which German provincialism is held up to

ridicule; and to these succeeded didactic Greek novels (*Aristipp und einige seiner Zeitgenossen*, 1800-2) and translations of the classics.

The most famous of all Wieland's works, and the only one which is still read to-day, is his epic *Oberon*, which appeared in 1780, when the "Sturm und Drang" was well advanced. But there is hardly an echo of "Sturm und Drang" in this sunny revival of the French mediæval romance of *Huon of Bordeaux*, in which Wieland, like an eighteenth century Ariosto, took so childlike a delight. *Oberon* stands as far from the German world of to-day as *The Faery Queene* from modern England; for although Wieland eked out the old story with borrowings from Shakespeare and Chaucer, he made no attempt to modernise it; the interest we still take in the poem is due solely to its graceful verse and easy narrative. Wieland was a liberator from an excessive Germanic fervour, but he can hardly be regarded as one of the builders of modern German literature; his influence was a negative one, destructive rather than constructive. Thus, with the exception of a few Austrian writers, like J. A. Blumauer (1755-98), the author of a parody on the *Aeneid* (1783), and J. B. von Alxinger (1755-97), who wrote epics in Wieland's style, Wieland had few disciples. Even in the comic epic and the novel, we can only regard Wieland as one of many crossing influences which moulded the work of the other writers of this age. There is, for instance, little or nothing of Wieland's spirit in *Die Jobsiade* (1784), an admirable comic epic in "Knittelverse," by K. A. Kortum (1742-1824), and the tendency is to overestimate his influence on M. A. von Thümmel (1738-1817), a writer who is still remembered by his comic epic in prose, *Wilhelmine* (1764), and his *Reise in die mittäglichen Provinzen von Frankreich* (1791-1805), the best of the many German imitations of Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*.

The German novel of the eighteenth century preferred rather to go direct to the great innovators, Richardson and Fielding, Sterne and Rousseau, than to build on the basis Wieland had laid. Indeed, we have again to turn

to Austria to find in A. G. Meissner (1753-1807), the author of *Alcibiades* (1781-88) and a many-volumed collection of *Skizzen* (1778-96), an unmistakable imitator of Wieland. Amongst the many authors of novels on English and French lines at this time, mention may be made of J. T. Hermes (1738-1821), Sophie von Laroche (1730-1807), A. von Knigge (1752-96), T. G. von Hippel (1741-96), and C. F. Nicolai, who has been already discussed in connection with Lessing. J. K. A. Musäus (1735-87), who, in spite of his rationalistic standpoint, awakened an interest in German folklore with his *Volksmärchen der Deutschen* (1782-86), satirised the Richardsonian novel in his *Grandison der Zweite* (1760-62).

Didactic as the novel of this period was, it did not satisfy the thirst for moral instruction, and we find, side by side with the fiction of the time, an equally popular pseudo-philosophic literature, which carried on the educational work begun by the moral weeklies. To this category belong books like the long popular *Über den Umgang mit Menschen* (1788) by A. von Knigge, the writings of Moses Mendelssohn (1729-86), Christian Garve (1742-98), J. J. Engel (1741-1802), and of Thomas Abbt (1738-66) and Justus Möser (1720-94), to whom we shall have occasion to return. A typical "popular philosopher" was J. G. Zimmermann (1728-95), a Swiss, who spent the best part of his life in Hanover as physician to the English king. In this disciple of Haller's the same elegiac, almost misanthropic vein is to be found as in his master, a misanthropy which the influence of Rousseau intensified. Books like his *Betrachtungen über die Einsamkeit* (1756) and *Von dem Nationalstolze* (1758) are not merely full of suggestive and original thought, but often appear to us, in their avoidance of the conventional ideas of rationalism, strangely modern and prophetic. To this age belonged, too, Germany's greatest satirist, G. C. Lichtenberg (1742-99), a native of Oberramstadt, near Darmstadt. Unless it be Lessing, Germany possessed no clearer-headed man of letters in the eighteenth century than Lichtenberg; he had an unrivalled power of precise and lucid expres-

sion. He twice paid a visit to England and had imbibed English ideas; but in his love for the aphorism, he was rather the German Laroche-foucauld than the German Swift. Unfortunately, however, his writings are fragmentary and ephemeral, and he is best remembered now by his masterly description of Garrick's acting in his *Briefe aus England* (1776-78) and his commentary on Hogarth's works (1794-99).

Johann Friedrich Herder is the most modern spirit of the eighteenth century; no other thinker or writer of that age, not Rousseau or Diderot, not Kant, or even Goethe himself, had so clear an idea whither human thought was tending, or saw so far into the intellectual movements of the future as he. But it is as an originator of new ideas, not as a poet, that he takes rank among the leaders of modern German literature. His historical position is due to the fact that he brought the movement inaugurated by Klopstock into harmony with the European craving for a "return to nature," and prepared the outburst of German individualism which we know as the "Geniezeit," or "Sturm und Drang."

Herder was born in the village of Mohrungen in East Prussia on August 25, 1744, and grew up amidst the severest privations. At the University of Königsberg he came under the influence of Kant, and won the friendship of one of the most stimulating men of the time, J. G. Hamann (1730-88), the "Magus im Norden." Hamann was a fervid, undisciplined genius, who wrote and thought by flashes of intuition, and is best remembered by his fragmentary books, *Sokratische Denkwürdigkeiten* (1759) and *Kreuzzüge des Philologen* (1762); he turned away from the insipid philosophy of the "Aufklärung," and looked to genius and enthusiasm as the motor forces of humanity. Through Hamann Herder became acquainted with English literature, above all, with the works of Shakespeare and with Ossian. In 1767 Herder, who had meanwhile become teacher and preacher in the Domschule in Riga, published the work by which he first became famous, *Fragmente über die neuere deutsche*

*Literatur*, these fragments being intended to serve as supplements to the *Literaturbriefe* founded by Lessing, Nicolai, and Mendelssohn. As far as the views expressed were concerned, Herder's standpoint was not essentially different from that of the *Literaturbriefe*, but he approached literature in a different way. Lessing's periodical was, as we have seen, an admirable example of that eighteenth-century criticism, which assumes that the critic, by virtue of his office, stands at a superior level to the work criticised: Herder's *Fragmente* inaugurated the modern method of criticism, which was first to find general favour with the Romantic School. The critic's duty, as here conceived, is to understand and appreciate rather than to judge; he approaches the masters of poetry in a spirit of humble enthusiasm, endeavouring to find in them general ideas of universal application to their age. The *Fragmente* were followed in 1769 by the more polemical *Kritische Wälder*—the title is an allusion to Quintilian's "sylvæ"—in which Herder's position towards his predecessor Lessing is more sharply defined.

In 1769, after five years' drudgery in Riga, Herder's longing for freedom was realised; he took ship from Riga to Nantes, and spent nearly five months in France. Of this journey we possess a journal (*Journal meiner Reise im Jahre 1769*) which forms one of the most interesting of all Herder's works; it is a record of the most magnificent literary, æsthetic, and political dreams that ever haunted a poet's brain; here we find for the first time clearly stated that fundamental idea which runs through all Herder's life, the idea of the human race and human culture as a product of historical evolution. This idea might, indeed, be accepted as a summing up of all Herder's work; his writings are a collection of fragments of one great work which only existed in the author's spacious mind, a work on the evolution of mankind.

After his return from France Herder became travelling-tutor to the son of the Prince-Bishop of Lübeck, and arrived with his pupil in Strassburg in September 1770. Here Herder broke off his engagement and spent several

months undergoing treatment for an affection of the lachrymal gland ; in these months Goethe, then a student, sat in devout worship at his feet. In Strassburg the "Sturm und Drang" movement was born, and in 1773 appeared under Herder's ægis a little book which may be regarded as its manifesto, *Von deutscher Art und Kunst*. Its principal contents were an essay glorifying Ossian and popular song, and demanding a collection of "Volkslieder"; a panegyric on Shakespeare; another on Gothic architecture and the Strassburg Minster; and a retrospect on the Germanic past as a lost ideal. The contributors were Herder, Goethe, and Justus Möser, the last mentioned being also the author of the first German history written from Herder's evolutionary standpoint, *Osnabrückische Geschichte* (1768). Better known are Möser's *Patriotische Phantasien* (1774), which show how sharp the antagonism had become between the old and the new, between eighteenth-century rationalism and "Sturm und Drang."

Herder's further contributions to the literature of the "Sturm und Drang" were a prize-essay, *Über den Ursprung der Sprache* (1772), two remarkably prophetic books, *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit* (1774), and *Älteste Urkunde des Menschengeschlechts* (1774), and, most important of all, his *Volkslieder* (1778-79), a collection of the popular songs and ballads of all peoples. Meanwhile, in 1771, Herder had settled down as chief pastor in Bückeburg, but in 1776, thanks to his Strassburg pupil Goethe, he received an invitation to become chief pastor and "general superintendent" in Weimar; and Weimar remained his home until his death on December 18, 1803. His influence on German literature was practically limited to the awakening of the "Sturm und Drang" and his all-important activity in the early seventies. But in Weimar he wrote his most ambitious book, the *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784-91), a work which traced, in accordance with his theory of historical evolution, the development of human culture from its earliest awakening down to the Crusades. Epoch-

making as, in many respects, Herder's *Ideen* was—and it forms the link between the old pedagogic ideas of Rousseau and the philosophic system of Hegel,—its importance for the history of literature is hardly greater than that of the many volumes of theological writings which filled up Herder's time in these years, or his later antagonism to his first teacher in philosophy, Kant. Only once again, and that in the last years of his life, did Herder make a contribution of abiding value to Germany's poetry: in 1805, more than a year after his death, appeared his translation of the Spanish ballad-literature centring in the *Cid Campeador*. To this book the ballad-poetry of the nineteenth century owes a debt that has hardly been adequately acknowledged.

But German literature as a whole was not prepared to make the leap from Klopstock to the "Sturm und Drang" with such suddenness as its leaders; and, before proceeding to consider the movement which Herder and Goethe initiated, we have to turn to a group of poets who represent a more gradual transition from the first to the second stage of the individualistic revolt in German literature. Klopstock exerted, as we have seen, a more immediate influence on his contemporaries as a lyric poet and as a discoverer of German antiquity than as the poet of the *Messias*; and it was from the fermentation of Klopstock's lyric that the quieter more reflective poetry of the "Göttinger Hain" or "Dichterbund" emerged. In September 1772, the eventful year in which Herder and Goethe formulated the gospel of "Sturm und Drang," a number of young Göttingen students of poetic tastes met together one moonlight evening at Weende, a village outside Göttingen, and founded the "Bund" under an oak-tree; friendship, patriotism, freedom—these were the watchwords which they inscribed on their banner, and they are the dominant notes of their poetry. On the whole, however, they were not militant poets; their verse is, for the most part, subdued and elegiac. The common tie which bound them together in the early years was the *Göttinger*



*Musenalmanach*, which had been founded in 1770 by H. C. Boie (1744-1806) and F. W. Gotter (1746-97). These two men had not had in view a particularly German publication; both, and especially Gotter, were French in their tastes; in fact, Gotter was, as a translator and adapter of French plays, the last prominent champion of French classicism in Germany. Before very long, however, the *Göttinger Musenalmanach* had become the organ of the "Göttinger Hain" and the acknowledged receptacle for the most original lyric poetry of the time.

The most prominent personality in this group was Johann Heinrich Voss (1751-1826). As an original poet, Voss rarely rises above mediocrity, but his life presents a picture of tough determination and indomitable energy amidst discouraging conditions. Boie had made it possible for him, after a childhood of extreme privation, to study in Göttingen, where he devoted himself to classical philology; and the best part of his life he spent as a provincial schoolmaster at Eutin, eking out his living by the scanty pittance of his pen. At last, in 1805, his worldly position was improved by his being appointed Professor at Heidelberg, where he died in 1826. Voss tried his hand at many forms of poetry, but lyric inspiration of a higher kind failed him; even the simplicity of the Volkslied did not altogether lie within his powers. His talent was one of seeing, not feeling, and he is best remembered to-day as a translator of Homer and as the author of a couple of idylls which prepared the way for Goethe's *Hermann und Dorothea*.

*Homers Odyssee*, which Voss published in 1781, is the most successful rendering of Homer into a modern tongue, and it is successful for a reason similar to that which made Luther's Bible the great "Volksbuch" of the sixteenth century. Voss succeeded in transferring into modern German the spirit of the Greek epic; he has interpreted it by the light of that primitive peasant life he had himself lived in his youth. Others, and above all, Goethe, have realised better the poetic capabilities of the German hexameter, as a reproduction of the Greek

epic measure, but none has been able to approach the ancient epic in so unsophisticated a spirit as Voss. His later translations, that of the *Iliad* (1793), of Hesiod, or of Shakespeare (1818 ff.), may be in accuracy superior to the first; but they fail to reproduce so faithfully the spirit of their originals. Voss's own *Idyllen* (first collected edition in the *Gedichte*, 1785) gave the impression of being as widely separated from those of Gessner, his immediate predecessor in the field, as the German social novel of the time is from the pastorals of the Renaissance. The two best, *Der siebenzigste Geburtstag* (1781) and *Luise* (1784), describe simple, everyday happenings in the life of the people, the former a birthday celebration, the latter the wedding of a young village pastor, with a realism that is at times almost excessively minute. Voss taught his contemporaries how the homely world of the novel could be raised to the level of poetry: his *Idyllen* are an interpretation in terms of the eighteenth century of what he learned from his master Theocritus.

To the same transition-phase in German literature, which connects Klopstock with the "Sturm und Drang," belong three other poets who, without being members of the "Göttinger Dichterbund," were closely allied to it. The first of the three, Leopold von Göckingk (1748-1828), shows that same kinship with the older anacreontic poets that is noticeable in Hölty, but this feature is so pronounced in Göckingk that we are tempted to class him rather with the imitators of Hagedorn and Wieland than with the Göttingen disciples of Klopstock. Göckingk possessed the same fluent mastery of versification as Wieland, and he excelled in the poetic "epistle." More akin to Voss is the Holsteiner, Matthias Claudius (1740-1815), whose simple, unassuming piety won for him a popularity not unsimilar to that of Gellert in an earlier generation. Nowadays, it is true, we are inclined to detect a certain affectation in Claudius's constant harping on the "Volk"; the "Wandsbecker Bote," as he was called after the journal he edited for more than four years (1771-75), found it to his advantage to accentuate the rôle of "popular" poet which his patrons imposed upon him. At the same time, there is much that is still interesting—genuine popular songs and amiable sketches of provincial life—in his works, which he collected for the first time in 1775 under the extraordinary title of *Asmus omnia secum portans*.

Greater than either of these, and more influential than all the other Göttingen writers together, was the third poet that has to be considered, Gottfried August Bürger (1747-94). Bürger stands, moreover, nearer to the "Sturm und Drang" than any of the others. Domestic miseries and petty economic struggles made up his life, and his passionate temperament was in permanent conflict with the narrow provincialism amidst which he had to live. This poet, whose fame was for a time European, was compelled to struggle through life as an ill-paid official in a small German village, and, later, as an unpaid professor in the university of Göttingen. It was Bürger's supreme merit to have created, on the model of

the *Percy Ballads*, which awakened an enthusiasm in Germany second only to that of Ossian, the national German ballad. At one stroke he leapt into fame with his famous *Lenore* (1773), a ballad which kindled the imagination of Sir Walter Scott and of many another young poet in every literature of Europe; indeed, Bürger's *Lenore* was hardly less far-reaching in its influence than Goethe's *Werther* itself. Wilhelm, Lenore's lover, has fallen in the battle of Prague, and she, despairing of his return, rebels against God's providence. But in the night her Wilhelm does return; his horse is at the door; he bids her mount behind him. Then begins the wild ride through the night, a ride as fearful as that of the "wilde Jäger" himself. At last the goal is reached, and Lenore's companion reveals himself as a skeleton with hook and hour-glass. So great was the fame of this ballad that Bürger's other poems have been unduly overshadowed by it. But *Das Lied vom braven Mann* (1777), *Des Pfarrers Tochter von Taubenheim* (1781), and, above all, *Der wilde Jäger* (1778), deserve almost as high a place as *Lenore* in the ballad-literature of the eighteenth century.

Bürger's literary achievement is virtually restricted to his ballads, his other poetry being of minor importance. His influence was not only immediate, but also lasting; and it defined to some extent the poetic activity of the Romantic School at the beginning of the nineteenth century. A. W. Schlegel was proud to acknowledge Bürger as the master to whom he owed most when, as a young student, he sat at his feet in Göttingen.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## GOETHE AND THE "STURM UND DRANG."

THE period in German literature which is known as the "Geniezeit," or the "Sturm und Drang," was the most national German phenomenon of the eighteenth century; it was the natural consequence of that outburst of lyricism and individualism with which Klopstock had broken down the literary formalism of classicism. Lessing and Wieland, it is true, were retarding moments in its development, but the spirit of the time was too strong even for them. In Herder the Germanic forces burst out afresh, and with a vigour before which Lessing's and Wieland's classicism could avail little. In a larger sense, however, the "Sturm und Drang" was only a manifestation of a movement that was European, the German form of the individualistic revolt, the rebirth of sentiment and the return to nature, which had begun in England and found its greatest exponent in the Swiss writer, Rousseau.

For the actual beginnings of the "Geniezeit" we are obliged to go back to men like Hamann and Herder, and in its later stages we find the movement passing gradually into Romanticism proper at the close of the century. It is, however, convenient to regard the period of revolt as extending from Herder's *Fragmente* in 1767 to Schiller's *Don Carlos* in 1787; it may be conceived pictorially as forming an ellipse, of which these two works mark the two extremes of the periphery, while the poles round which the ellipse turns are Goethe's *Götz von Berlich-*

*ingen*, which appeared six years after the *Fragmente*, and Schiller's *Räuber*, which appeared six years before *Don Carlos*.

Amongst the pioneers of the new movement may be numbered, besides those already mentioned, J. K. Lavater (1741-1801), who infused a spirit of individualism into the religious life of the time, and F. H. Jacobi (1743-1819), who interpreted Spinoza in the light of the new sentimentalism. Lavater followed, as a poet, in the train of Klopstock with dreary religious epics, but he is only remembered to-day, if he is remembered at all, by his *Physiognomische Fragmente zur Beförderung der Menschenkenntnis und Menschenliebe* (1775-78), a characteristic product of "Sturm und Drang" humanitarianism. The criticism of the period was inaugurated by a follower of Klopstock, H. W. von Gerstenberg (1737-1823), whose *Briefe über Merkwürdigkeiten der Literatur* appeared in 1766 and 1767; Gerstenberg also gave the "Sturm und Drang" its first characteristic drama, the harrowing psychological tragedy of *Ugolino* (1768). It was Goethe, however, who first brought aim and order into the ideas of the movement and laid down the lines on which it was to develop.

The childhood of Johann Wolfgang Goethe, who was born at Frankfort-on-the-Main on August 29, 1749, was sunny and idyllic. His imagination was early kindled by the stories of the Old Testament and the *Messias*, by the pageant of an old-world coronation of a German emperor in the Frankfort town-hall; while a marionette-theatre, and later the French players who performed regularly during the French occupation of the town in 1759, brought him under the spell of the theatre. His home itself, the roomy patrician house in the Grosse Hirschgraben, offered variety and stimulus enough; his mother, bright and happy by nature, being the real companion of his early years. Two episodes in particular stood out in Goethe's later memories, the quartering of the French Count Thoranc, a man of refined artistic tastes, on his father's house during the Seven Years' War,

and his first love-affair, the heroine of which perhaps gave her name to Gretchen in *Faust*.

Goethe's first glimpse of the great world outside of Frankfort was gained as a student of the university of Leipzig, where he spent the years 1765-68. He learned his art in the literary *milieu* that had been created by Gottsched and Gellert; he wrote dramas in alexandrines (*Die Laune des Verliebten*, 1768; *Die Mitschuldigen*, 1769), and love-songs in the light, anacreontic tone which the polished society of Leipzig appreciated; the Frankfort Gretchen was forgotten for Käthchen Schönkopf, the daughter of a Leipzig wine-merchant, who taught Goethe what jealousy was as well as love. An illness brought his light-hearted student days to an abrupt conclusion, and in the hours of slow recovery in Frankfort he busied himself with Lessing, Shakespeare, and Rousseau, and sought a key to the mysteries of life in alchemy and mysticism. When he recovered, his father proposed that, instead of returning to Leipzig, he should complete his legal studies at Strassburg.

In the seventeen months which Goethe spent in Strassburg—the most intensely lived period of his whole life—he became a poet and the leader of his time. In Strassburg he found his feet at once; at the table where he dined there were congenial friends, amongst them Heinrich Jung Stilling (1740-1817), whose autobiography, a strange monument of practical pietism, is still a German "Volksbuch." A month or two later Herder arrived in Strassburg, the Herder whose *Fragmente* was the key to the new world on the threshold of which Goethe stood. The influence of Herder on the young poet was magical; the new, vague ideas which were surging in him, at once took visible shape; Herder communicated to him his own revolutionary ideas of history, of the "Volk," whose heart stood revealed in its songs; he taught him to understand what he had hitherto only felt, the beauty of the Gothic cathedral that towered above him, and of the poet who was to mean so much to German poetry in

this age, Shakespeare. Simultaneously with Herder's influence, another experience awakened the poet in Goethe, his love for Friederike Brion, daughter of the pastor of Sesenheim, an Alsatian village some twenty miles to the north of Strassburg. It is possible that Goethe, looking back on this idyll of his youth from the heights of maturer years, saw it through too poetic a veil,—saw it with the eyes of an author, who stood near to him in his Strassburg days, Oliver Goldsmith. But the lyrics and letters to Friederike show that there is, after all, more "Wahrheit" than "Dichtung" in the description of the episode in the tenth and eleventh books of the poet's autobiography. In the *Sesenheimer Lieder*—songs in which the artificial anacreontic passes insensibly into a lyric of genuine emotion—Goethe first revealed himself as a poet of the first rank. That the romance would end tragically was to have been foreseen; neither the Alsatian country girl nor the young poet, who already dimly realised that no common destiny was marked out for him, could have been happy. The breach had to come, and it plunged both in despair; Friederike's life was broken, and Goethe, in the restless agony of his *Wanderers Sturmlied*, himself experienced the tragic conflicts which lie behind the works he wrote in the next few years.

In the autumn of 1771 he returned to Frankfort to begin his practical initiation into the business of an advocate, and in the following spring he spent a few months in Wetzlar, then the seat of the Imperial law courts. Here another love-affair, that with Charlotte Buff, the betrothed of a young colleague, J. C. Kestner, once more disturbed his equanimity. A visit to the Rhine and the new acquaintances he made there helped to mitigate his grief at parting from Lotte, and on his return to Frankfort he threw himself with increased energy into literary work. During the next few years he formulated the creed of the new literary movement in his own contributions to the *Frankfurter Gelehrte Anzeigen* (1772-73), and in his share in Herder's *Von*



*deutscher Art und Kunst*; and in 1773 and 1774 Goethe published two works of the very first importance: *Götz von Berlichingen* and *Die Leiden des jungen Werther*.

The first of these was the immediate outcome of his study of Shakespeare, the second of his study of Rousseau. *Götz von Berlichingen* is a historical tragedy of the Reformation period, a restless, loosely constructed dramatic chronicle; a work overflowing with spontaneous, unrestrained strength. It bids defiance to all unities except the unity imposed on the drama by its hero, and by the poet's own enthusiasm for the strong man who combines love of freedom with a wide-hearted humanity. At the opening of the drama Götz von Berlichingen has taken his former schoolmate, Adalbert von Weisslingen, prisoner, Weisslingen being an adherent of the Bishop of Bamberg, with whom Götz is at feud. In Götz's castle at Jaxthausen, Weisslingen sees and loves Götz's sister Maria, and resolves for her sake to break with the bishop and join Götz. He returns to Bamberg to put his affairs in order, and there falls a victim to the intrigues of his former friends. He forgets Maria in Jaxthausen and marries Adelheid von Walldorf, a court beauty. Meanwhile Götz has put himself at the head of the peasants' revolt, and on their defeat is condemned to die at Weisslingen's hands. Maria begs Weisslingen to save her brother for the sake of their old love; he tears the sentence, but himself dies, poisoned by his own wife. Adelheid is condemned by the Holy Vehmgericht, and Götz succumbs to his wounds.

*Götz von Berlichingen* was published in 1773, although in its first form it was completed somewhat earlier, and in the following year appeared *Die Leiden des jungen Werther*. Perhaps the greatest tribute to Goethe's genius at this time is the fact that his second masterpiece is so entirely different from its predecessor. While *Götz* was a historical drama, or, at least, dealt with a historical theme, *Werther* is an immediate, personal "confession." It is a poetic interpretation, in the spirit of Rousseau's *La*

*nouvelle Héloïse*, of the crisis through which the poet had himself passed in Wetzlar. While *Götz* laid the basis for a national German literature, *Werther* gave that literature an interest that was cosmopolitan. Reality is but little veiled in this novel in letters; Werther with his passionate love for nature, his absorption in Homer and Ossian, is Goethe's self displayed in the light of eighteenth-century sentimentalism. Werther loves Lotte, the betrothed of his friend Albert, as Goethe had loved Kestner's *fiancée*, although no doubt other loves and other experiences are in the novel consciously and unconsciously interwoven; Werther's passion gains the upper hand; he borrows his friend's pistols and shoots himself. *Werthers Leiden* was the most popular European novel of its day, and still lives, even after its sentimentalism has grown old-fashioned and effete, by the vividness and truth of its characterisation.

With these two works the new era was fairly inaugurated; Goethe's further contributions to the literature of "Sturm und Drang" were of comparatively minor importance. He gave voice to the new ideas in dramatic satires such as *Götter*, *Helden und Wieland*, and *Satyros*; he pled for the dignity of the artist's calling in fragmentary dramatic scenes (*Künstlers Erdewallen*, *Künstlers Apotheose*); he planned an epic on *Der ewige Jude*, dramas on *Sokrates*, *Mahomet*, and *Prometheus*, a noble fragment from the last-named drama dating from 1773. Two plays, *Clavigo* and *Stella*, appeared respectively in 1774 and 1776; both mark a descent from the lofty political enthusiasm of *Götz von Berlichingen* in the direction of the "domestic tragedy"; but both show an advance towards a more practical and effective dramatic technique. And, like *Werther*, both are "confessions" of the poet's own troubled heart. These plays were finished, but another, and the greatest of all, *Faust*, was to remain a fragment until the close of Goethe's life. The kernel of the First Part of *Faust*, Faust's despairing impeachment of life, and all the scenes of the Gretchen tragedy—scenes that we now reckon among the most in-

tensely tragic in the whole range of dramatic literature—were already written before Goethe left Frankfort for Weimar at the close of 1775.

Before following Goethe's life further, we must turn to consider the literary movement which he had inaugurated so brilliantly. The "Sturm und Drang" was pre-eminently an age of dramatic literature, and the theatre the arena in which the young writers of the day fought out their battles. Of the group of dramatists immediately associated with Goethe at this time, the most gifted was J. M. R. Lenz (1751-92), who had been in Strassburg at the same time as Goethe; indeed, it was Lenz's weakness and misfortune that he tried all his life to wander in Goethe's footsteps. His dramas, of which the best are *Der Hofmeister* (1774) and *Die Soldaten* (1776), present vivid, realistic pictures, in which contemporary life and manners are regarded from an often cynical and satiric standpoint. Like all these young writers, Lenz was a fervid admirer of Shakespeare; his *Anmerkungen übers Theater* (1774), which was accompanied by a prose translation of Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost* under the title *Amor vincit omnia*, provides a key to the dramaturgic ideas which actuated the "Sturm und Drang"; it also supplements the *Briefe über Merkwürdigkeiten der Literatur* (1766-67), by H. W. von Gerstenberg (1737-1823), which have already been mentioned. But in Lenz's own dramas he has learned little from Shakespeare except how to free himself from the tyranny of the rules; and the main sources from which he drew the ideas behind his plays were Rousseau and Diderot. Among the playwrights of the "Sturm und Drang" Lenz was, however, second only to Goethe in the art of peopling his dramas with real, living figures; he does not give us merely puppets declaiming extravagant ideas. Revolting as his scenes at times are in their outspoken realism, they maintain their hold on us by virtue of this creative power.

The genius of F. M. von Klinger (1752-1831) was more akin to that of Schiller than of Goethe; that is to say, he was

"Sturm und Drang" to the moving sentimental pictures of domestic life which Iffland and Kotzebue produced. More interesting is Friedrich, or, as he preferred to be called, "Maler" Müller (1749-1825), who forms a link not so much between "Sturm und Drang" and the later Romanticism, as between the old-world sentimentalism of Gessner's idylls and Klopstock's early odes on the one hand, and the Romantic poetry of Tieck on the other. His *Fausts Leben dramatisiert* (1778) belongs, however, to the "Sturm und Drang" not merely because it is written with unshaken faith in Shakespeare, but also because it gives voice to the favourite theme of the movement, the effort of the strong man to obtain the mastery of life. His much later play, *Golo und Genoveva* (1781, but not published till 1811), is one of the best of the so-called "Ritterdramen," the degenerate successors to *Götz von Berlichingen*.

In the history of the drama under the influence of the later "Sturm und Drang," three clearly marked tendencies may be traced: these are, first, a rapid development of the "Ritterdrama" just mentioned; secondly, an increasing popularity of the "bürgerliche Tragödie," which, without belying its origins, learned much from later French writers like Diderot and Sébastien Mercier; and lastly, an increase in the prestige of the German theatre coupled with the rise of an essentially actor's drama. Representative writers of the "Ritterdrama," which found a stronghold in Munich, were Graf J. A. von Törring (1753-1826), J. M. Babo (1756-1822), and F. J. H. von Soden (1754-1831). The later "bürgerliche Tragödie" was cultivated by, amongst others, O. H. von Gemmingen (1755-1836), whose *Der deutsche Hausvater* (1780), an imitation of Diderot's *Père de famille*, was very popular and prepared the way for the German masterpiece of this class of drama, Schiller's *Kabale und Liebe*. The "Nationaltheater" of Mannheim, where Schiller's early plays were performed for the first time, was chiefly associated with this type of play, and it was for a time, when A. W. Iffland (1759-1814) was its leading actor, the most important

theatrical focus in Germany. Hamburg, however, still retained a certain prestige, and that in spite of the failure of Lessing and his friends to establish there a national theatre, and under F. L. Schröder (1744-1816), the greatest German actor of the eighteenth century, it assumed once more the leading rôle in theatrical matters. Both Iffland and Schröder wrote dramas, the former realistic plays of everyday life, moralising and sentimental as the public of the day demanded, but by no means devoid of higher literary interest; while the latter, with less literary pretensions, translated and adapted plays from the English. Schröder's chief merit remains, however, the fact that he laid the foundations of the modern theatre, and gave Shakespeare his place, once and for all in Germany, at the head of the classic repertory. In this respect the performance of *Hamlet* in Hamburg under Schröder's auspices, on September 20, 1776, marks the beginning of a new era in the history of the German stage.

In this same year Joseph II. practically laid the foundation of what was subsequently to become the greatest of all German theatres, the "Hofburgtheater" in Vienna. In literary respects, however, Austria still lagged considerably behind North Germany; the Viennese theatre depended for its repertoire on centres like Hamburg, Gotha, and Mannheim, its own contributions being limited to alexandrine tragedies by C. H. von Ayrenhoff (1733-1819), who can only be regarded as a belated follower of Gottsched, and to imitations of North German plays, especially of *Minna von Barnhelm*. But in the music-drama Vienna had already begun to lead the way; Gluck had been succeeded by W. A. Mozart (1756-91), whose masterworks, *Die Hochzeit des Figaro* (1786), *Don Juan* (1787), and *Die Zauberflöte* (1791)—the two former plays of Italian origin, the latter a genuine "Volksposse"—were all produced in Austria.

The influence of *Werthers Leiden* was, if anything, more immediate than that of *Götz*. Goethe's novel called forth an endless flood of sentimental fiction, of which J. M.

Miller's *Siegwart* (1776) and F. H. Jacobi's *Woldemar* (1777-79)—the one lachrymose and sentimental, the other sentimental and philosophic—may be taken as representative types; but *Werther* also infused a new spirit into the older family novel and into the pedagogic fiction which Rousseau had brought into vogue. Gradually, however, the novel emancipated itself from the leading-strings of the "Sturm und Drang." J. J. Heinse (1749-1803), a strange, undisciplined genius, who was really more akin to Wieland than to the sentimentalists, illustrates this transition; in his *Ardinghello, oder die glückseligen Inseln* (1787) he expressed that yearning of the German soul for Italy and enthusiasm for Italian art which from now on are constant factors in the literary and artistic life of Germany. His second novel, *Hildegard von Hohental* (1795-96), deals mainly with music, but, like the first, it, too, is disfigured by emotional excesses and extravagances. Both books, however, are clearly forerunners of the fiction of the Romanticists. Transitional, too, is another outstanding novel of this epoch, *Anton Reiser* (1785-90), by K. Ph. Moritz (1757-93): an autobiography rather than a work of the imagination, *Anton Reiser* stands, if only by virtue of the importance its author attaches to the psychological side of his story, midway between Wieland's *Agathon* and Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*.

Two other writers have to be mentioned before we leave the "Sturm und Drang," Forster and Seume. Both belong to what might be called the outermost limit of that movement. J. G. Forster (1754-94) accompanied Cook on his second voyage round the world. It is not, however, his account of that voyage—which was written in English—but his masterly *Ansichten vom Niederrhein, von Brabant, Flandern, Holland, England und Frankreich* (1791), which assures him a place in literary history. It would almost seem as if a century of literary evolution lay between the sentimental journeys of writers like Thümmel and Nicolai, and this faithful and painstaking

description—written in a masterly prose style—of the nature and the art of these lands. Like so many of the German idealists of this age, Forster came intellectually to grief on the French Revolution. Beyond it he could only see a blank of disruption and anarchy, and he died in 1794, before the development of events could bring him either consolation or hope. J. G. Seume (1763-1810) belonged to a still later generation, but his passionate hatred of tyranny and his humanitarian rationalism have more in common with the ideas of Rousseau and the “Sturm und Drang” than of the later Romanticists. His writings, the famous *Spaziergang nach Syrakus im Jahre 1802* (1803), *Mein Sommer* (1806), and *Mein Leben* (1813), are mainly autobiographic, and give vivid glimpses into a life that had more than its share of vicissitude and adventure.

## CHAPTER XV.

## SCHILLER ; GOETHE'S FIRST PERIOD IN WEIMAR.

THE fact that Goethe and Schiller were united during the best years of both their lives by a warm friendship has led to them being considered as parts of one great, uniform movement, which is summed up in the word "classicism." But, in reality, the two poets stood in many respects at opposite poles; there was an innate antagonism in their natures which personal intimacy never removed. The conditions under which they had grown up were, moreover, as different as possible. Goethe was born almost in the lap of luxury, Schiller was the son of a poor army-surgeon who had by degrees worked his way up to a captaincy in the Würtemberg army; Goethe's childhood was passed in happy carelessness, while the best years of Schiller's youth were spent shut off from the world as an unwilling captive in a military school. A tragic note runs all through Schiller's life: he had to struggle to the last against straitened means and ill-health; every step he gained had to be fought for, every advance meant a scar: while Goethe's trials were in great measure what we might call of his own making: his worldly position was assured, and his life unfolded itself harmoniously. In ripe old age Goethe basked in Olympic calm, while Schiller remained a fighter to the end, a seeker after an undiscovered goal.

Johann Friedrich Schiller was born at Marbach on November 10, 1759: his childhood was passed there, at Lorch, and at Ludwigsburg; his early tastes inclined him



to the church as a career, but the Duke of Würtemberg laid claim on the promising scholar for his new "Military Academy" at the "Solitude" near Ludwigsburg, where there was no opportunity for theological studies. In this school Schiller spent seven years, from 1773 to 1780, first with a view to a career as a jurist, later, when the school was removed to Stuttgart, as a medical student. Much as the Duke of Würtemberg has been blamed for his tyrannical treatment of the young poet, it may be questioned if a theological training would have fitted him as well for his future career as that in the Duke's academy; here, at least, he had a glimpse of court life, he was able to read widely, and he formed passionate friendships. Before Schiller left the academy to take up an unsatisfactory position in Stuttgart as a regimental doctor, he had virtually finished his first drama, *Die Räuber*. It was privately printed in 1781, and performed at Mannheim in the beginning of 1782, the young poet being surreptitiously present. This play was, as we have seen, the second pole round which the movement of "Sturm und Drang" revolved; it stands in the same relation to the latter half of that movement as *Göts.von Berlichingen* stood to the earlier half.

The idea on which *Die Räuber* is built up—fraternal dissension—is similar to that of Klinger's *Die Zwillinge*, Leisewitz's *Julius von Tarent*, and other revolutionary dramas of the time. Schiller owed the story to his fellow-countryman C. F. D. Schubart (1739-91), a poet akin to the Göttingen group, whose revolutionary fervour had to be expiated by ten years' imprisonment in the Castle of Hohenasperg. Karl Moor, the hero of Schiller's play, is a student in Leipzig, who has been estranged from his father by the machinations of his villainous brother Franz; believing that his father has disowned him, he places himself at the head of a band of freebooters in the Bohemian forest. The "Robber Moor" becomes a second Götz, helping with a strong arm to re-establish justice in the world. He longs, however, to see once more his home and his betrothed, Amalia, and returns unan-

nounced. He finds that Franz has imprisoned his father in a tower with a view to starving him to death, and the old man is only rescued to die. Franz kills himself, and Karl realises that in fighting against human iniquity, he has himself sinned against the eternal laws of the world; he gives himself up to justice. Perhaps no play of this eventful time mirrored so faithfully the ideas and cravings of its age as *Die Räuber*; it is a typical embodiment of the "Sturm und Drang" spirit, a document which, read aright, foreshadows even the coming Revolution in France. This explains its power over contemporaries; from a purely literary standpoint it is, moreover, a work of extraordinary promise, for it is in the best sense of the word dramatic, and dominated as no German tragedy before it, not even *Götz von Berlichingen*, by a genuine tragic fate.

Schiller's success made him more and more discontented with his miserable lot in Stuttgart; as appeals to the Duke were in vain, he at last resolved on flight. On the 22nd of September 1782 he made good his escape from Würtemberg. The step was inevitable, but it plunged him in serious difficulties. He found that the Mannheim National Theatre, on which he had pinned his hopes, had no position to offer him; and for a time he was obliged to take refuge in the Thuringian village of Bauerbach, where he put the finishing touches to his second drama, *Fiesco*, which had been already written before he left Stuttgart; he also completed here a third drama, which was to have borne the title *Louise Millerin*, and planned a fourth on the subject of Don Carlos, son of Philip II. of Spain. In 1783, however, he obtained the coveted appointment of "theatre poet" to the Mannheim Theatre for a year, and here *Fiesco* and *Louise Millerin*, or, as this tragedy was rechristened by the actor Iffland, *Kabale und Liebe*, were performed in 1783 and 1784. Both these plays show an advance on *Die Räuber* in characterisation and construction, but neither has the elemental power of the first play. The subject of *Die Verschwörung des Fiesco zu Genua*, the conspiracy of

Fiesco di Lavagna against the Dorias in Genoa in the sixteenth century, was, compared with *Die Räuber*, an exceedingly complicated one, for it involved the fate of a whole republic; the theme was perhaps still somewhat beyond Schiller's powers, but the skill with which he handled its many threads is a tribute to his dramatic genius. With *Kabale und Liebe*, the first great love-tragedy in German literature, the “tragedy of common life,” which Lessing had perfected in *Emilia Galotti*, reaches its culminating point. For his background the poet drew upon a world he knew, the court of Würtemberg. By more than dubious methods President von Walter has gained control of the affairs of a small German Residenz, and he now proposes to put the crown to his efforts by marrying his son Ferdinand to the Lady Milford, a cast-off mistress of the Prince. Ferdinand, however, has fallen in love with Louise, the daughter of the musician Miller; and the President, to thwart his son's determination to marry her, has recourse to stratagem. Louise is made to believe that her father's life depends on her writing a letter in which she appears to be carrying on an intrigue with a foolish court-official. The letter is played into Ferdinand's hands, and an oath prevents Louise making explanations until she has drunk the glass of poisoned lemonade her lover has prepared for her and for himself. The drama closes with the President and his secretary being handed over to justice for earlier misdeeds. While engaged on these three dramas Schiller was also making a name for himself with other literary work; he had already attempted journalism in Stuttgart, and in Mannheim he issued the first number of a new periodical, the *Rheinische Thalia* (1785), in which the first act of his next drama, *Don Carlos*, was published. As a lyric poet he had also contributed the largest share to an *Anthologie auf das Jahr 1782*, which he edited in Stuttgart.

In April 1785 Schiller accepted a warm invitation from four admirers of his genius in Leipzig—C. F. Körner, who remained his life-long friend, L. Huber, and two sisters, Dora and Minna Stock, to whom these young

men were engaged—to pay them a visit. The brighter epoch in the poet's life, which began in Saxony, finds its echo in the jubilant strains of his ode *An die Freude* (1785), the final word in that optimistic, semi-pagan cult of joy, which Hagedorn had first voiced in modern German poetry. The summer months of 1785 were spent in Gohlis, near Leipzig, and from the autumn of that year until the summer of 1787 Schiller lived quietly as a guest of his friend Körner in Dresden and at Loschwitz on the Elbe. The literary results of these years are all contained in the *Thalia*, which Schiller continued to edit, the adjective "Rheinische" in the title being omitted as the journal now appeared in Leipzig. These include two novels, *Verbrecher aus Infamie* (1787), a realistic robber-romance, and *Der Geisterseher* (1789), the story of a young prince who is converted to catholicism by trickery; but the theme of the latter is hardly worthy of the excellent descriptive writing it contains.

The principal harvest of these years was Schiller's first tragedy in blank verse, *Don Carlos, Infant von Spanien*, which, after having appeared serially in his journal, was revised and published separately in 1787. In *Don Carlos* Schiller took a step similar to that which Goethe took in his *Egmont*; he made a complete break with his earlier dramatic work. As first planned, *Don Carlos* was to have been a prose tragedy not unsimilar to *Kabale und Liebe*, the story of an unhappy love; gradually, however, it assumed larger dimensions in Schiller's imagination; the intrigue gave place to a political "purpose"; the hero was more and more pressed into the background, and the Marquis Posa, his friend and confidant, became the spokesman of the poet's own lofty dreams of a cosmopolitan humanism. The culminating scene in the drama is the interview in which Posa pleads for freedom of thought, with all the arguments of eighteenth-century rationalism, at the feet of Philip of Spain. Schiller found the plot of his tragedy in a novel by the French Abbé St Réal, which had also served Otway for his tragedy *Don Carlos*. The French princess,

Elizabeth of Anjou, is destined to be the bride of Don Carlos, but on her arrival in Spain the king resolves himself to marry her. The main theme of the drama is the hopeless love of the prince for his stepmother. The king is led to suspect his son, and this suspicion is corroborated by the Princess Eboli, a lady of the court, who is herself in love with Carlos. Carlos's attempts to find an outlet for his energies in a larger political life, although supported by the intrigue of the Marquis Posa, who has gained the confidence of the king, are thwarted; the Marquis is shot, and the prince handed over to the Grand Inquisitor. The plot of *Don Carlos* has, no doubt, suffered under the changes of plan, but in these changes lay its significance; Schiller here took the step which broke irrevocably his connection with the "Sturm und Drang."

In December 1784 Schiller had had an opportunity of reading the first act of *Don Carlos* to the Darmstadt court on the occasion of a visit of the Duke of Weimar, and in 1787 he paid his first visit to Weimar. This visit, however, was disappointing, for the Duke himself was absent, Goethe was in Italy, and he was not received with much warmth either by the court or by Herder and Wieland. Meanwhile he continued those studies in history which he had begun in connection with *Don Carlos* in Dresden, and in 1788 appeared the first and only volume of his most ambitious historical work, *Geschichte des Abfalls der vereinigten Niederlande*; this was followed in 1791-93 by the more popularly written *Geschichte des dreissigjährigen Krieges*. Schiller approaches history, as more or less all the historians of the eighteenth century, from the standpoint of the artist rather than of the scientific investigator; he selects the salient features that appeal to him, and distributes his light and shade to fit the hypothesis from which he sets out. To him history is rather a chain of great biographies than a methodical description of events; but he possessed at least one great virtue, which is rare in the scientific historian, the virtue of style.

His labours had one important result; on Goethe's recommendation, Schiller was appointed professor of history at the neighbouring university of Jena by the Duke of Weimar, and in the following year, 1789, he married Charlotte von Lengefeld, whose acquaintance he had made on the occasion of his first visit to Thuringia. Meanwhile literature was not altogether neglected, and in poems like *Die Götter Griechenlands* (1788) and *Die Künstler* (1789), he discovered a medium of poetic expression, the philosophic lyric, in which he has no rival in his own literature. But before this he had come under a new influence, which profoundly modified the work of his later life, that of Immanuel Kant. From history Schiller turned to philosophy. The metaphysical side of things always had an attraction for his mind, and in the *Thalia* he had already published a kind of fiction, in which two friends exchange their views on philosophic questions. At Körner's instigation he threw himself in 1791 into the study of Kant, being particularly attracted by Kant's æsthetic speculations.

Schiller's writings on æsthetics may be summarised as an attempt to supplement and develop the ideas of his master; it is in this light that the essay *Über Anmut und Würde* (1793) and the *Briefe über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* (1795) have to be considered. Kant had mainly discussed the beautiful as a subjective impression on the beholder; Schiller sought an absolute criterion of beauty; his aim was to discover the quality in an object that led to its being regarded as beautiful. And this he believed he had found in what he called the "freedom in appearance" ("Freiheit in der Erscheinung") of the object. From the beautiful Schiller passed over to the moral, and applied the same method of reasoning to ethical problems. He endeavoured to bridge over those breaches which Kant had made in the utilitarian philosophy of the eighteenth century. Repelled by the severe and uncompromising ideals of moral duty which Kant set up, he demanded that our lives should rather be guided by the two principles of "Anmut" and

“Würde,” of grace and dignity, and should rise to a higher harmony, in which duty was at one with desire. A more personal contribution to æsthetics was his treatise *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung*, which appeared two years later. Nominally a dissertation on the fundamental nature of poetry illustrated by the German literature of the eighteenth century, it is in reality a justification of his own genius in comparison with Goethe’s. Schiller divides all poetic production into two great classes: primitive poetry and the highest manifestations of genius in modern literatures—such as Shakespeare and Goethe—are “naïve”; modern poetry, on the other hand, is almost invariably “sentimental,” that is to say, it does not merely give artistic form to what it observes; it also reflects, muses, desires. Schiller recognised that his own genius was entirely “sentimental” in its qualities, and his book was a personal plea for his own right to existence beside Goethe. But before *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* was published, Schiller had become the friend of Goethe, to the second phase in whose career we have now to turn.

Goethe arrived in Weimar from Frankfort in the end of 1775. The favourable opinion which the young Duke of Weimar had already formed of him increased on nearer acquaintance; he believed that the poet would not only be an ornament to his duchy, but could be made a valuable servant of the state. Goethe threw himself with ardour into the new life; and he who, only a year before, had been overflowing with poetic ideas and great literary schemes, seemed for a time to forget literature altogether. As he gradually found his feet again, the inevitable love-affair kept him from being too much engrossed by the routine of official duties. Goethe’s new love, Charlotte von Stein, who was some years his senior and the mother of several children, has been called the noblest woman that he ever loved; and his affection for her resembled a warm intellectual friendship rather than a passion. And now, for nearly ten years, happy years, full of a varied activity, political, scientific, and literary, Goethe published no work

of the first rank ; at most he produced a handful of perfect lyric poems (*An den Mond*, *Wonne der Wehmut*, *Wanderers Nachtlied*, *Ilmenau*), a "Singspiel," *Jery und Bätely* (1780), and a delicate little one-act play, *Die Geschwister* (1787), depicting the development of sisterly love into a warmer affection. But these seem only a poor harvest compared with the feverish activity of his last year in Frankfurt.

Then came, however, the great crisis in the poet's life. In October 1786 he set out for Italy, not returning to Weimar until the summer of 1788. What Italy meant for Goethe it is impossible to exaggerate ; far away from the distractions of Weimar life, and the petty interests of the court, Goethe was able to pass his life calmly in review ; for the first time he seemed, as it were, to get outside himself and see himself objectively. Art, before which he had stood for so many years, as before a sphinx, now revealed its inmost secrets to him ; he realised at last what art meant in the march of eighteenth century humanism, saw that it was something calmer and more universal than it had appeared amidst the passionate enthusiasm of his youth for a Shakespearean tragedy, a Gothic cathedral, or a Volkslied ; he felt that he himself was the born artist, the bearer of the mission that had revealed itself to him, and under the Italian sun he resolved to devote himself henceforth solely to its service. Thus Italy gave him the stimulus he needed to finish his many plans and fragments. The edition of his *Schriften*, which began to appear in 1787, included a large number of new works. He put the finishing touches to *Iphigenie auf Tauris* (1787) and *Egmont* (1788), and all but finished *Torquato Tasso* (1790) ; plans were laid for new classical dramas, a *Nausikaa*, an *Iphigenie auf Delphos* ; some at least of the beautiful *Römische Elegien* were written in Rome ; while amidst foreign surroundings he revised his most German work, *Faust*, which was published in its first fragmentary form in 1790.

The significance of Italy to Goethe is to be read out of the two dramatic poems, *Iphigenie auf Tauris*



and *Torquato Tasso*. As a poet, he has written deeper works than either, works fraught with greater meaning, but he has written nothing superior to them in artistic form and classic, harmonious beauty; here we find what is rare in German poetry, perfect thought wedded to perfect form. *Iphigenie auf Tauris* is an adaptation of the tragedy of Euripides to modern ideals and modern needs; here, as in the ancient tragedy, Iphigenie, the Greek priestess, is an exile in the land of the barbarian Scythians, and has already begun to shed her mild and civilising influence on the rude people. The Scythian king, Thoas, demands her hand in marriage, and persists in his demand even after she reveals to him that she is of the race of Tantalus, so hated by the gods. Meanwhile, two strangers have arrived at Tauris, and these the disappointed king commands shall be sacrificed according to the inhuman rites which for a time Iphigenie has succeeded in holding in abeyance. Iphigenie learns that one of these strangers is her own brother Orestes, who, tortured by the furies, seeks, as the only relief held out to him by the oracle, the temple of his sister, where he must obtain the statue of the goddess. The climax of the tragedy is, as in Euripides, the freeing of Orestes from the avenging fates; but while to the Greek poet this is a purely outward incident, the furies relaxing their hold upon their victim, in Goethe's play we have only the psychological process which Euripides visualised. Orestes confesses to Iphigenie that the blood of his murdered mother is on his head; this confession to his sister, who stands before him as the inspired handmaid of Artemis and the saviour of her race, frees him from the remorse that haunts his steps. In one other important point the modern poet departs from his Greek model. Truer to actuality, Euripides shows, in the theft of the goddess's image, the cunning of the Greek mind triumphing over the heavy-witted barbarian; Goethe, on the other hand, makes his Thoas a humane tyrant of the eighteenth century; and once more, at the close, Iphigenie overcomes his hostility to the Greeks by the frankness of her

confession, and wins him as a friend. The drama closes with the Greeks departing in peace; no "goddess from a machine," as in Euripides, is needed to cut the knot, no caprice of a higher power to overrule the course of nature.

More subjective and dramatically less satisfying is *Torquato Tasso*. Indeed, *Tasso* belongs, properly speaking, to that category of Goethe's dramas which have been grouped together as "confessions." The court of Alphonso of Ferrara is obviously that of Weimar; the figures of the drama have all more or less their German counterparts, and Tasso, the over-sensitive poet, whose tragedy springs from his own lack of worldliness and self-control, is Goethe himself. But such resemblances are shadowy and distant, and very different from the direct portraiture which Goethe permitted himself in his earlier, realistic period. Tasso at the beginning of the play has just completed his epic, *La Gerusalemme liberata*, and brings it to his duke; he is rewarded by a laurel wreath which the duke's sister, the Princess Leonore von Este, places upon his brow. The Secretary of State, Antonio Montecatino, views with disfavour this flattery of the poet, and expresses himself in a way that is calculated to offend Tasso's self-esteem. The ill-feeling between the two men increases, until in a moment of forgetfulness Tasso draws his sword upon the minister. The poet is placed under arrest, and when set free resolves to leave the court; but before he goes, he confesses to the princess his love for her. This foolish step makes him impossible at court, and he turns at last to Antonio to find in him his best-meaning friend. *Tasso* is a play of many flaws: it offends against the chief canons of dramatic construction; the characters are conceived only, as it were, from the inside, not dramatically and in their totality; and the course of events is too shadowily indicated, too uninteresting, to hold the attention of an ordinary theatre audience. But as poetry *Tasso* is one of the most concentrated and wonderful of all Goethe's creations; in no other work has he laid bare so unreservedly the inner workings of the super-sensitive poetic tempera-

ment; it is the tragedy—for tragedy it is, in spite of its inconclusive ending—of genius.

Still another of Goethe's greater dramas was completed and published in the edition of his *Schriften* of 1787-90, *Egmont*. In plan *Egmont* belongs to a much earlier period of the poet's life; for it was sketched out in a form as irregular as that of *Götz von Berlichingen* before Goethe left Frankfort for Weimar. *Egmont* is a more popular drama on the stage than *Tasso*, but it is even less dramatic in the true sense of that word; *Tasso* is at least psychologically dramatic, but *Egmont* has hardly even this surrogate for outward and visible conflicts. It is a collection of dramatic episodes, centring in a great personality; Graf Egmont, the leader of the Dutch in their revolt against Philip II. of Spain, remains in Brussels in spite of the warnings he receives that his life is in danger; he prefers the love of his Klärchen to his own safety; the consequence is that the Duke of Alba has him arrested and executed. These are the facts of the play; and round these facts Goethe has grouped a series of dramatic genre-pictures, which serve to throw light upon the hero's fate. Above all, Egmont himself is a supremely interesting personality; he is Götz over again, but a happier Götz, who has left the “Sturm und Drang” of life behind him and sees the world with more optimistic eyes; he succumbs, not in tragic battle with an adverse fate, but merely because his own great heart has trusted his fellowmen too much. Götz died with the word “freedom” on his lips, a freedom for which he had fought in vain; to Egmont appears the goddess of freedom in the semblance of Klärchen and promises him triumphs in the world to come. *Egmont* may be only an indifferent drama, but Goethe has invested his Egmont and Klärchen—the latter one of the most delicately drawn of all Goethe's women—with a charm that they can never lose.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## THE CULMINATION OF WEIMAR CLASSICISM.

ON June 18, 1788, Goethe returned to Weimar from his Italian journey. The realities which confronted him here did not, however, at all fit into that ideal scheme of life and work which he had mapped out for himself in Italy; after the serenity and beauty of Italian landscape and antique art, he could not feel at home under northern skies; he was repelled by the turbulent, unbalanced literature of the later "Sturm und Drang." He withdrew into himself and took but little interest in poetry and art until his friendship with Schiller, which began in 1794, led him back again to these things. In minor prose-writings of this period, such as the *Unterhaltungen deutscher Ausgewanderten* (1795), and dramas like *Der Grosscophtha* (1791) and *Der Bürgergeneral* (1793), we see, too, how little Goethe was in sympathy with the political movement, or understood the terrible lesson of the French Revolution. In 1794 he published his admirable modernisation of the Low German epic *Reineke Fuchs*, and in 1795 and 1796 the *Römische Elegien* and the *Venetianische Epigramme*. But the first great work of this new period of Goethe's life was the novel, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, which appeared in the course of the years 1795 and 1796.

The plan of the novel had been considerably widened since Goethe first wrote it as a story of theatrical life (*Wilhelm Meisters theatralische Sendung*) in 1777; the theatre is now but an episode, although an important

one, in the educational process whereby a young man completes his apprenticeship to life. As in so many of his other works, Goethe has woven into his fiction the inevitable "confession"; for he, too, like Meister, had had his imagination nourished on poetry and a marionette-theatre; he, too, had come into conflict with the prosaic demands of a vocation in which his heart did not lie. But just as in *Werther* Goethe had carried to a ruthless logical conclusion a motive which had its origin in his own experience, so in this novel Meister becomes for a time what Goethe himself never was, the slave of his love for the theatre. Meister abandons his father's counting-house and joins a troupe of travelling players, ultimately becoming their leader. Romantic episodes are introduced into the story; mysterious figures, like the Harper and Mignon—the latter, perhaps, the most ethereal of all Goethe's creations—wind themselves round Meister's heart and influence his life; above all things, his chosen vocation brings him into touch with Shakespeare, whose *Hamlet* the company plays, giving Goethe an opportunity for reflections upon that work which have influenced all subsequent Shakespeare criticism. Gradually Meister discovers that the stage is not the goal of his life, but only an episode in his "apprenticeship"; he rises to new responsibilities and more serious aims. The pretty actress, Marianne, who had captivated his youth, gives place to Nathalie, the noble sister of Lothario; and she, in spite of other passing fancies on Wilhelm's part, at last completely retains his affections. The Harper is discovered to be the father of Mignon, the Romantic child with the instinctive, insatiable love of Italy; and with Mignon's death the novel closes. Wilhelm Meister's apprenticeship to life is at an end; he has passed, as Schiller said, "from a void, indefinite ideal to a definite active life, but without losing his idealising power"; he has realised the "holy earnestness" of life.

*Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* occupies a central position in the history of German fiction; it is the culmination of the eighteenth-century type of romance which, beginning

with imitations of Richardson and Fielding, passed to Wieland's *Agathon* and Moritz's *Anton Reiser*; and as the accepted model for the novel of the young Romanticists, it dominated German prose literature down to the rise of the social novel towards the middle of the nineteenth century. Many years later Goethe provided his novel with the sequel which the original title promised, *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* (1821-29); but this is a book of an entirely different kind, and can hardly even be called a continuation. To have finished *Wilhelm Meister* in the spirit of the first part—and Goethe, we know, had the intention of showing in what relations his hero was to stand to social problems, after he had completed his apprenticeship—was no longer possible a quarter of a century later. Between the two books lay not merely the French Revolution, but the rise and fall of Napoleon; the word society connoted two entirely different things in 1795 and 1820, and Goethe no doubt felt that his hero, to fit himself for this new society, would have had to pass through another apprenticeship. The *Wanderjahre*, which is eked out by a number of short stories, written at widely different times, contains Goethe's most explicit views on political and religious questions; and this, if not its quality as a novel, gives it an important place among the writings of his later years.

In the summer of 1794 Goethe and Schiller exchanged the first letters of that correspondence which forms one of the most precious documents of Weimar classicism. The immediate occasion was a new periodical, *Die Horen*, in which Schiller was anxious to obtain Goethe's collaboration. *Die Horen* was no more successful than Schiller's previous journalistic ventures, but it accelerated the growing friendship; the very antagonism of the outside world to the journal helped to bring the two poets closer together; and in 1795 they resolved to retaliate on their critics. They published together, not in the *Horen*, but in Schiller's *Musen Almanach* für 1796, a collection of distichs in the manner of Martial, to which

they gave the title *Xenien*, the Greek word "xenion" meaning a gift offered to a guest. These "gifts" seem to have fully achieved their object, although to a modern reader it is often not easy to understand where their sting lay; the critics of the Weimar poets were, however, silenced, and the way made clear for positive achievements. Schiller completed his *Wallenstein*, and Goethe one of his most perfect poems, *Hermann und Dorothea*.

In *Hermann und Dorothea* (1798) Goethe stands in the debt of one of the leading poets of the Göttingen school, J. H. Voss. That poet's adaptation of the primitive Homeric spirit to German conditions in his idyll, *Luise*, suggested Goethe's poem. *Hermann und Dorothea* is, however, no more to be described as an epic than its model; it is a "Novelle" or "short story" in hexameters. It tells how Hermann, son of the landlord of the "Golden Lion" in a village near the Rhine, finds his bride among a company of emigrants, who are fleeing from the terrors of the French Revolution. Goethe delights in describing in Voss's manner the daily routine of the village, the little trivial happenings that make up the villagers' life; and he draws with a perfect sureness of touch the village magnates, the innkeeper, the pastor, and the apothecary. The story is simple, even conventional, and is constructed a little artificially out of misunderstandings and surprises. But this very touch of artificiality is quite in keeping with the poetic style; for above all things, *Hermann und Dorothea* possesses style, not perhaps a Homeric style, but one at least more delicate and polished than was consistent with the turbid naturalism of *Luise*. *Hermann und Dorothea* might be described as Goethe's most "classic" poem; it is written with an objectivity which he had not yet attained in *Iphigenie* and *Tasso*, and its characters, stripped of the individual and the personal, have become the generalised ideals demanded by the classic theory which Goethe discussed with Schiller in these years. After the success of *Hermann und Dorothea*, Goethe attempted to approximate still more closely to the Homeric model by choosing

themes such as the story of the Swiss hero Tell, and even of the Greek Achilles himself, which seemed to him adapted to a genuine epic treatment. But his *Achilleis* did not get beyond the second canto, and the materials he had collected for *Tell* were subsequently handed over to Schiller for his drama on that subject.

Meanwhile Schiller's *Musen Almanach*, which continued to appear annually from 1796 to 1800 with more encouraging success than had attended any other of his periodicals, brought a new stimulus to bear on the lyric genius of both himself and Goethe. In the ballad Schiller discovered an opportunity for his genius, hardly inferior to the philosophic lyric, and from 1796 he enriched his literature with a series of masterly ballads—*Der Taucher*, *Der Handschuh*, *Der Kampf mit dem Drachen*, *Der Ring des Polykrates*, *Die Kraniche des Ibykus*, to mention only a few of the best known—which combine a keen sense for the dramatic and the picturesque with an almost Greek sensitiveness to form and style. In 1799 Schiller put the crown to his ballad-poetry with the magnificent *Lied von der Glocke*, a kind of poetic epitome of human life, in which, one might say, the two strains in the poet's lyric gift, the philosophic and the dramatic, meet and blend. And in friendly rivalry with Schiller Goethe wrote in 1797 ballads like *Der Zauberlehrling*, *Der Gott und die Bayadere*, *Die Braut von Korinth*, and, as a return to the Volkslied-like simplicity of his early lyrics, the cycle of *Die schöne Müllerin*—all poetry, which take an equally high place in the literature of German classicism.

Goethe's uncompromising classical theories in the years that followed *Hermann und Dorothea* detracted seriously, however, from the value of his dramatic work. His prologues and "Festspiele" for the Weimar theatre, his translations of tragedies by Voltaire, above all, his own severely classic dramas, *Die natürliche Tochter* (1804) and *Pandora* (1810), were of no significance for the future of the national drama. *Die natürliche Tochter* is nobly planned as the first of a trilogy in which Goethe hoped to embody his own conception of the French Revolution; but the



impersonal objectivity is carried to such lengths that the figures of the drama seem only pale shadows or statuesque abstractions to us. There is poetry both in *Die natürliche Tochter* and in the still more forbiddingly classic allegory of *Pandora*, but it is a poetry that appeals to the intellect, not the emotions. The classic doctrines obsessed at this time Goethe's whole intellectual life; his views on literature, his criticism of art, as is to be seen in his book on *Winkelmann und seine Zeit* (1805), in his art periodical, *Die Propyläen* (1798-1800), and in the principles on which he directed the Weimar theatre from 1791 to 1817, were uncompromisingly classic, and in marked contrast to the vigorous national spirit in German art and poetry, which the Romantic School had called into life. In 1808, however, appeared a work before which all Goethe's classical aberrations sink into insignificance, the national drama of the German people, the First Part of *Faust*. But, as the crowning work of the poet's life, *Faust* will be dealt with in the following chapter.

With his trilogy of *Wallenstein* Schiller opened the series of his dramatic masterpieces. Like *Don Carlos*, *Wallenstein* had been long in the poet's workshop, but it had benefited by the delay. To the conscientious study of history which had preceded it, is due the fact that *Wallenstein* gradually emerged from a drama in the style of *Don Carlos*, to become a spacious historical trilogy, the ripest historical drama, as it was virtually the last, of the eighteenth century. Another influence is to be seen at work in *Wallenstein* which was hitherto absent from Schiller's dramatic work, the influence of Greek tragedy; *Wallenstein* himself is a tragic figure, less in the manner of Shakespeare than of Sophocles, and the drama is, in Greek fashion, the history of a catastrophe foreordained by fate, the struggle of a great soul against powers that are too strong for it. Only at a late period in the composition of the tragedy did Schiller resolve to divide it into three parts: it is virtually only one long tragedy in ten acts, preceded by a prologue. This prologue, entitled *Wallenstein's Lager* (1798), displays vividly and

picturesquely the motley elements that made up Wallenstein's camp as it lay before Pilsen in the winter of 1633-34; it provided a background for the whole drama, and obviated the necessity of breaking the classic unity of style by the introduction of *milieu*-scenes into the body of the tragedy. When the first drama, *Die Piccolomini* (1799), opens, Wallenstein, in whose character the dominant forces are overweening ambition and a superstitious faith in his lucky star, is within easy distance of his goal, which is to see himself crowned king of Bohemia. His strength lies in the army he has himself created, and to turn the balance of power in his favour he is about to enter into a secret alliance with the Protestant Swedes. Only his blind faith in the stars holds him back until the propitious moment arrives. Meanwhile, however, in order to accelerate matters, Wallenstein's two staunchest friends, Field-Marshal Illo and Graf Terzky, take the opportunity of a banquet at which the leaders of the various regiments are all more or less intoxicated, to obtain the signatures of these men to a document declaring their inalienable allegiance to Wallenstein whatever may befall. One of them, however, an Italian, Octavio Piccolomini, whom Wallenstein trusts most, sees through the premeditated treason; but he abides his time. He warns his son Max, but Max Piccolomini refuses to listen to his father, for he loves Wallenstein's daughter Thekla and looks up to Wallenstein himself in blind hero-worship.

*Die Piccolomini* is merely a preparation for the real tragedy, *Wallensteins Tod* (1799). Wallenstein's fate is sealed; like another *Œdipus* he is fighting against powers that the spectator knows will be too strong for him. His plot to join the Swedes has been discovered; action is imperative, and he openly throws in his lot with the enemy. With tragic blindness he places all responsibility at the critical moment in the hands of Octavio Piccolomini; but the regiments upon which he relies break away from him and he stands alone, deserted at last even by Max Piccolomini. With the friends he still believes faithful to him he escapes to Eger, and is here assassinated by

one of them. The crowning touch of tragic irony is given to the drama by the arrival of a messenger from the Emperor, conferring on Octavio the title of "Prince."

No less classic in its adherence to the methods of Greek tragedy is Schiller's next tragedy, *Maria Stuart* (1800). This drama contains less outward incident than *Wallenstein*, and it has, properly speaking, hardly any tragic conflict at all. The scene is at Fotheringay Castle on the last days of Mary Stuart's life; she is already condemned to die before the curtain rises, and the episode which fill out the play—the attempt of the young catholic convert Mortimer, who is in love with her, to effect her escape, Leicester's vacillating sympathy for her, even the culminating scene, in the garden of Fotheringay, in which she seals her own fate by her angry remonstrances with Elizabeth,—all these are but semblances of a dramatic conflict where none exists. But, on the other hand, Schiller has embodied in this tragedy an idea that was deeply rooted in the ethics of the German classical age—namely, that of moral regeneration and purification through suffering. This is the significance of the long and harrowing fifth act, in which Mary is lifted up by her religion to a peace of soul she has not known before; the expiation on the scaffold becomes for her a triumph of her better self. This spiritualising of the final conflict in the heroine herself atones in very great measure for the absence, to which English readers are naturally more sensitive than German, of an adequate historical background.

A similar ethical idea lies behind Schiller's tragedy, *Die Jungfrau von Orleans* (1801), for which he borrowed the paraphernalia and colouring of the Romantic drama. For his purpose in this play the poet was compelled to depart even further from history than in his previous dramas; his Joan of Arc is a wholly idealised figure. The Divine command to Joan to lead her army against the English and crown her king in Rheims is coupled with the condition that success depends on her resistance of all earthly love; and in place of the historical tradition, according to which Joan fell into the hands of the English and was burned by

them as a witch, Schiller makes his heroine break her vow. Offers of marriage made to her by the French commanders, Dunois and Lahire, she rejects at once, but in single combat with Lionel, a young English soldier, her heart softens, and she grants him his life. She feels that by this weakness she has frustrated her holy mission, and mutely accedes to the accusation of witchcraft which her father brings against her. Her only desire now is to atone for her guilt by a heroic death. She falls into the enemy's hands; Lionel protects her and throws himself at her feet; but her moral regeneration is complete; she is proof against his love, breaks her chains and once more leads her people to victory. Like Maria Stuart, she, too, dies triumphant. Although in its ideas, its personages, and in its employment of the unnatural and the supernatural, *Die Jungfrau von Orleans* is far removed from our modern sympathies, we are bound to recognise that Schiller, having resolved to write a "Romantic" tragedy, has consistently carried out his plan; in a higher degree perhaps than any other of Schiller's dramas, *Die Jungfrau von Orleans* possesses the quality of harmonious style.

Outwardly a great step in the direction of rendering German tragedy classic, although in reality only a further concession to the pessimistic quietism of Romanticism, is Schiller's next tragedy, *Die Braut von Messina* (1803). This drama is an obvious experiment, an attempt to adapt the technique of the Greek tragedy to the modern stage; like a Greek tragedy, *Die Braut von Messina* is not divided into acts, and the action is helped out by means of a chorus, the introduction of which Schiller defended in a preface to the play. The scene is Messina, the time the Middle Ages. Dreams are the starting-points of the action. The Prince of Messina sees one night a lily growing up between two laurel trees, when suddenly the lily turns to fire and destroys everything around it. A wise Arabian interprets this dream as meaning that a daughter will be born to him and will cause the death of his two sons, Cæsar and Manuel; and he orders the daughter who is subsequently born

to be drowned. His wife, Isabella, however, also trusting to a dream, which is interpreted as meaning that her daughter will unite in love the hostile temperaments of the two brothers, saves the child's life and has it brought up secretly in a monastery. Both dreams, like the oracles of Greek tragedy, come true; the brothers in turn see their unknown sister and love her. In blind jealousy Cæsar kills Manuel and, when he learns that Beatrice is his own sister, kills himself. In devising this plot Schiller's aim was to adapt to modern, or at least mediæval conditions, the dominant motive of Greek tragedy; but in the transference the motive lost its dignity. For the oracle was an integral part of the Greek religion, whereas the dreams of the *Braut von Messina* appear to the modern mind, intolerant of superstition, as, at most, the caprices of an evil power. The form of the tragedy was against its success on the stage, but in the choruses the lyric and reflective side of Schiller's genius found a congenial medium of expression.

Meanwhile Schiller's interest in Greek tragedy led him to translate the most Greek of all Shakespeare's plays, *Macbeth* (1801); he also, about the same time, made a German version of Gozzi's comedy *Turandot* (1802), translated a couple of lighter French comedies by L. B. Picard, and, in the last months of his life, Racine's *Phèdre* (1805). His last tragedy, *Wilhelm Tell* (1804), shows a complete emancipation from the narrow classicism which had led to the blind alley of *Die Braut von Messina*. With *Wilhelm Tell*, more than with any other of his tragedies since *Die Räuber*, Schiller widened the province of the drama; here, for the first time, he has brought the action and the fate of a whole nation within the compass of five acts. *Wilhelm Tell* is an epic, panoramic drama in which the individual hero is but the spokesman of his people. The theme of the play is the revolt of the Swiss against the tyranny of their Austrian rulers. The national discontent is fanned into open rebellion by the caprice of the Landvogt Gessler; Tell refuses to bend the knee to Gessler's cap, erected on a pole in the market-place

of Altdorf, and for this contempt is condemned by the Landvogt to shoot with his cross-bow an apple placed on his son's head. He succeeds, but boldly confesses that the second arrow he holds in readiness was intended for the tyrant, had the first killed his child. Tell is thrown into chains and conveyed by boat to Küssnacht, but on the way a storm arises and he has to be released to steer the boat; he brings it sufficiently near to the land to allow him to leap ashore and make good his escape. Meanwhile the representatives of the four Forest Cantons assemble on the Rütli above the lake and swear to take common action against the tyranny under which they suffer; and when Gessler falls by Tell's arrow in the narrow way near Küssnacht, his assassination appears as the righteous vindication of a suffering people rather than the personal vengeance of a single individual. The last act, in which Tell's deed is thrown into relief as an impersonal national achievement by comparison with the assassination of the Austrian Emperor by Duke Johann of Swabia, is lacking in organic connection with the main theme.

*Wilhelm Tell* was the last drama it was given to Schiller to complete. In January 1805 he began *Demetrius*, the story of the Russian pretender who only realises that he is not the man he has given himself out to be, when it is too late to retract. This would, no doubt, have been still another step forward in Schiller's emancipation from classicism; but he had not quite finished the second act when the fatal illness overtook him from which he died on May 9, 1805.

Schiller has been for so long surrounded by a halo as pre-eminently the national poet of the German people, that it is difficult for modern criticism to arrive at a final judgment of his place in the literary history of Europe. His writings are inspired by a noble idealism, a lofty aspiration and enthusiasm, but, as the generation of to-day in Germany has begun to realise, these things have less meaning and vitality for us now than the impartial realism of Goethe's calm outlook on life. Schiller was

too deeply immersed in the classic movement of the eighteenth century to be numbered among the few great poets who are for all time. He was above all things a fighter; he went through life as a partisan, a fiery champion of high causes; the calm, dispassionate wisdom of Goethe was never his. None the less, he is Germany's greatest dramatic poet, and has put his stamp, as no second poet, on the entire German drama of the after-time.

## CHAPTER XVII.

MINOR WRITERS OF THE CLASSICAL PERIOD;  
GOETHE'S OLD AGE.

IN following to their close the lives of Goethe and Schiller, we have been carried beyond the limits of the eighteenth century; we must now return to consider the general state of German letters in the epoch of Weimar classicism, that is to say, in the years that lay between the passing of the "Sturm und Drang" and the rise of Romanticism. In this period of what might be called humanitarian classicism, the intellectual movement of the "Aufklärung," the superseding of pseudo-classicism by a truer and more genuinely antique classicism, reached a culmination; all that was best in the intellectual movement of the eighteenth century is concentrated in its last ten or twenty years.

The entire epoch is dominated by the gigantic figure of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), alike the maturest product of rationalism and the spiritual liberator of modern Europe. Kant was born and died at Königsberg; his whole life long he was associated with that town and he taught at its university from 1755 onwards. The fruits of his philosophy are to be seen in the three epoch-making treatises he published between his fifty-seventh and sixty-sixth year: *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (1781), *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* (1788), and *Kritik der Urteilstkraft* (1790). The word which is common to all these titles sums up the method and spirit of Kant's philosophy; he was the founder of a



"critical" philosophy. Just as Descartes, a century and a half earlier, had with one magic phrase swept away the dry formalism of mediæval scholasticism, so now Kant destroyed the ungrounded speculation and dogmatising metaphysics into which Cartesianism had degenerated. When Kant declared that the only way to certainty concerning the unknown was through the critical study of the human mind, it was a triumph for the "Aufklärung" of which the older "Aufklärer" could not have dreamed. Kant based his metaphysics on an understanding of the processes and the limitations of the intelligence, and the result of his investigations is the subject of his three treatises. The first of these discusses the pure reason, and has become an indispensable basis for all modern metaphysics; the second analyses the practical reason, and insists on subordination of the practical life to the will and implicit obedience to the moral law as the first conditions of the higher life, a doctrine of duty for duty's sake, which reacted on the character of the German people and helped to weld them into a great nation. Lastly, the third *Kritik* laid the foundation of the æsthetic theory of the German classical period which, as we have seen, Schiller helped materially to develop.

The bracing influence of the Kantian philosophy is nowhere more apparent than in the work of Kant's first important successor, J. G. Fichte (1762-1814). Fichte was a native of the Oberlausitz in Saxony, and had studied under Kant in Königsberg. Appointed professor at Jena in 1794, the year in which his *Wissenschaftslehre* appeared, he had only begun to attract students from all parts of Germany when he was accused of atheism and compelled to resign. For a time he was in Erlangen, and subsequently, in 1810, was appointed the first rector of the new university of Berlin. German idealism, which with Kant had emerged purified and ennobled from the older rationalism, was carried by Fichte to a still higher point; for it was he who first grasped the significance of the individualistic tendency in Kant's thinking; he

first gave clear expression to that intensely personal idealism which acted like a ferment on the literature of the time. But Fichte's "ego" was not merely a metaphysical, but also a moral "ego"; from the Kantian "categorical imperative" he deduced a still more uncompromising conception of the self-denying duties of the moral life; and he repeated again, but with fuller knowledge and understanding, the dogmas of the early thinkers of the "Sturm und Drang," that "personality" is the highest good and that our destinies lie in our own hands. Fichte's patriotic earnestness, which finds its expression in his magnificent *Reden an die deutsche Nation*, delivered in Berlin in the winter of 1807-8, when the German people lay crushed under the heel of Napoleon, was a factor to be reckoned with in the national rising of 1813 and the War of Liberation.

It is impossible here, without going beyond the limits of literary history, to follow the influence of this stimulating idealism on the many currents and undercurrents of German intellectual life at the close of the eighteenth century, but one name must at least be mentioned, that of Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835). Humboldt was personally associated with the Weimar literary circle, and one of the intellectual makers of modern Germany. As Prussian Minister of Education he directed the stream of higher culture into practical channels, and gave Germany a system of national education. As a scholar he contributed to the science of comparative philology; his translations from the Greek show genuine poetic power, and his critical study of *Hermann und Dorothea* (*Ästhetische Versuche*, 1799) justifies the confidence which Goethe and Schiller placed in his literary judgment.

A characteristic illustration of the effect of this new wine in old bottles, this tonic idealism on the easy-going rationalism of the foregoing period, is to be seen in the representative novelist of these years, Jean Paul Friedrich Richter, or, as he preferred to sign himself, "Jean Paul" (1763-1825). When Richter first suc-

ceeded in attracting attention as an author with *Die unsichtbare Loge* in 1793, he had behind him a life of suffering and privation, such as was only too commonly the lot of German writers in the eighteenth century. He was by birth a Franconian, and, like his nation, combined in many ways characteristics of the Low and the High German. Richter's books are full of the contrasts and incongruities which we associate with the writers of a transition period. Into the old type of novel which Sterne had given to eighteenth-century Europe, he forced the idealism and individualism of the age of Fichte; he combined the crudities of the German family-romance of the "Sturm und Drang" with the new fiction which Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* had inaugurated. A kindly, sentimental humour and irony, of which again Sterne was the original source, is to be found side by side with morbid, sociological problems and pleas for individual licence; and, above all this, a soaring Germanic imagination which, in its most daring flights, shows an affinity with that of Klopstock or of the German mystics of the early seventeenth century.

The series of Richter's greater novels begins with *Hesperus* (1795), in which there is still much of the "Sturm und Drang"; with the charming prose idyll of *Quintus Fixlein* (1796) he found, however, a more congenial channel for his talent. His third important book, *Blumen-, Frucht- und Dornstücke, oder Ehestand, Tod und Hochzeit des Armenadvokaten Siebenkäs* (1796-97), is as fantastic as its title; it combines the idyllic and sentimental tone of *Quintus Fixlein* with a flagrant defiance of social conventions in the spirit of the early "Sturm und Drang." Richter's masterpiece is *Titan* (1800-3), on which the influence of *Wilhelm Meister* is sufficiently strong to justify us in classing it with the early novels of the Romantic School. The crudities of Richter's earlier books have here disappeared, and the main problem of the story—the sentimental education of a young prince at the hands of three women, who each contribute to the moulding of his character and help him to discover his

true self—is a characteristically Romantic one. Of Richter's later writings, idyllic studies of the life he knew, such as *Der Jubelsenor* (1797), *Fliegeljahre* (1804-5), and *Leben Fibels* (1812) are the most readable to-day, more readable than the ambitious but lumbering novel *Der Komet* (1820-22). Richter is an illustration of the nemesis which a contempt for artistic form brings with it; in the early nineteenth century the most popular of German novelists—and the opinion of his own countrymen was shared by De Quincey and Carlyle in England,—he is nowadays hardly read at all.

The coming epoch of Romanticism was more clearly reflected in lyric poetry at the turn of the century, and that mainly because the lyric is able to avoid the disturbing vicissitudes to which other forms of literature are exposed; its development is more continuous and gradual. The younger generation departed far from Goethe's type of drama, and they no doubt believed they had advanced beyond *Wilhelm Meister* in their novels, but Goethe's shorter poems remained for them the unsurpassable models of lyric expression. The history of the lyric in these years is not easy to follow, for its materials have to be sought less in the works of eminent poets than in the contributions to the many "Musenalmanache" which flooded the German book-markets. Of the better known minor poets of the age Friedrich von Matthisson (1761-1831) may be mentioned, a native of Magdeburg, whose sentimental, elegiac lyrics show an affinity with those of the Göttingen school. A similar old-world sentiment, varied occasionally by more vigorous strains, is to be found in the lyrics, published in 1793, of the Swiss poet, J. G. von Salis-Seewis (1762-1834), author of the little poem which Longfellow has made a household word in English-speaking lands, *Ins stille Land* ("Into that silent Land"). To the past rather than to the future belongs also G. L. Kosegarten (1758-1818), a Mecklenburg poet who followed in the footsteps of his fellow-countryman Voss; but neither his lyrics nor his epics (*Jucunde*,

1808), in spite of an obvious effort to strike a higher note and appeal to a higher literary culture, have that original force and racy flavour of the soil which attract us in Voss's *Luise*. The lyric in dialect is represented by J. P. Hebel (1760-1826), a native of Basel, whose *Alemannische Gedichte* (1803) are composed in the German dialect of the southern Schwarzwald. Lastly, mention has to be made of C. A. Tiedge (1752-1841), the once popular author of a didactic poem, *Urania* (1801); but Tiedge is long forgotten, and may be regarded as the last representative in literature of the undisguised didacticism of the German "Aufklärung."

While these poets belong, one and all, to the past, another writer of this age, Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1843), belongs to the future; although he was not personally associated with the Romantic School, his temperament and poetic faculty were essentially Romantic. A fellow-countryman of Schiller's, he passed an unhappy and chequered life, which was cut short by insanity at the age of thirty-two; thus, from 1802 onwards, he ceased to exist for literature, although he did not die until 1843. In common with the Romanticists he was filled with a passionate discontent; but while they took refuge from the prosaic world into which they were born, in the Middle Ages, Hölderlin sought it in the culture of ancient Greece. His most ambitious book is a novel in letters, *Hyperion, oder der Eremit in Griechenland*, which appeared in two volumes in 1797 and 1799; it purports to be a chapter from contemporary, or almost contemporary Greek history, and describes the Greek struggle for independence against the Turks; its hero is a dreamy, fervid Werther, whose enthusiasm oscillates between the two poles of nature and Greek antiquity. Greece and nature, these, too, are the dominant notes of Hölderlin's lyric poetry; and he is, above all things, a lyric poet. Perhaps, indeed, he is best described as a mediator between the two centuries; he combines the reflective lyric of the eighteenth century with a Romantic pantheism and the pessimism of a more modern

"Weltschmerz." He stands between Klopstock and Schiller on the one side and the Romantic lyric of the nineteenth century on the other.

In spite of the enormous impetus given to the German drama by Schiller, there was no form of literature where a wider gulf separated the Weimar poets from the rank and file of German writers. The two forms of play associated particularly with the movement of "Sturm und Drang," namely, the "Ritterdrama" and the domestic tragedy, were neither of them capable of development; decay was inherent in them from the first. The "Ritterdrama," which at no time made much literary pretension, lost the little dignity it had by its extravagant sensationalism, and sank to the level of a crude popular entertainment; while the "bürgerliche Tragödie" deteriorated steadily from Schiller to Iffland and from Iffland to Kotzebue. August von Kotzebue (1761-1819) was no genius, but he was a playwright with a marvellously keen understanding for the needs of the stage. We have only to look at the repertory lists of the German theatres at the zenith of the classical era to see how completely he dominated the stage. Nor was his success confined to Germany; his plays were translated into every language, and he was the most popular playwright in Europe until the rise of Scribe in the following generation. His talent was, however, purely a talent for the theatre, an ability to create effective stage situations and striking stage figures, which gave the actors unbounded opportunities. In higher poetic or literary qualities he was more deficient than even Iffland. Among his most popular plays in their day were *Menschenhass und Reue* (1789), *Die Indianer in England* (1789), *Die Spanier in Peru* (1796), and *Die deutschen Kleinstädter* (1803), the last-mentioned a comedy that is even still occasionally seen on the German stage.

Before passing to the new era of German literature, which was inaugurated by the Romantic School, we have to follow to its close the life of Goethe. Schiller's death had left an irreparable gap in his life; he, the aristocrat

who held aloof from the movement of his time, was lonelier than ever. Even with the political awakening of his nation Goethe had little sympathy; Napoleon, whose genius overawed him, appeared to him as the man of destiny, against whom it was hopeless to struggle; and the triumph of German nationalism in 1813 meant comparatively little to this cosmopolite of the old *régime*. In literature, in spite of *Faust*, Goethe remained faithful to his classic ideals. *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*, which appeared in 1809, is a novel of classic form and classic beauty, although Goethe here returned to everyday realities and dealt with them from a personal standpoint. In the poet's work this book mediates, one might say, between the subjective methods of his first period and that extreme of objectivity which had resulted in *Die natürliche Tochter* and *Pandora*. *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* is a study of four people who seek out, in defiance of social and legal conventions, their "elective affinities," and virtually succumb before the tyranny of these conventions; it is the novel of a scientist, who watches coldly and impersonally the progress of a pathological and psychological experiment. The freshness of *Wilhelm Meister* is missing, but in its place has come a more penetrating insight into the workings of mind and heart: it is the "scientific" point of view from which Goethe regards his theme that makes *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* so interesting a forerunner of the later developments of the European novel.

In 1811 the second of the chief works of Goethe's later years began to appear, his autobiography, *Aus meinem Leben: Dichtung und Wahrheit* (1811-33), with which may be associated his *Italienische Reise* (1816-17) and *Die Campagne in Frankreich* (1822). The autobiography only extends as far as the close of Goethe's Frankfort life in 1775; the period which the poet recalls with such extraordinary vividness lay separated from him by half an ordinary lifetime. Letters and contemporary documents amply prove, however, that the truth of fact is here not unduly veiled in poetry: indeed, the title *Dichtung und Wahrheit* would seem merely to imply that

Goethe had subordinated the facts and events of his life to an artistic plan, and had interpreted them in view of his future development; the lights and shadows are adjusted by the hand of the artist rather than of the chronicler, and over the whole lies the calm optimism of the poet's later years.

Meanwhile Goethe's life was becoming fuller and fuller as the years went on. His interest in art showed no abatement; the journal, *Über Kunst und Altertum* (1816-32), which took the place of the earlier *Propyläen*, now became the general receptacle for his criticism. Science, too, engrossed him more and more with his advancing years. To optics he contributed studies on light and colour (*Beiträge zur Optik*, 1791-92; *Zur Farbenlehre*, 1810), in which he doggedly combated the Newtonian theory of the propagation of light by means of waves; and in geology he maintained the old "Neptunian" theory of the exclusively aqueous origin of the earth's crust against the "Vulcanists," or believers in its igneous origin. In those sciences his work was only negatively important; but in anatomy and botany (*Die Metamorphose der Pflanzen*, 1790, and *Zur Morphologie*, 1817-22) he laid down fundamental principles of morphological development which give him an important place among Darwin's predecessors. His acknowledged position at the head of German letters brought him into touch with the intellectual aristocracy not merely of German-speaking lands, but of all Europe; his correspondence was endless, and his diaries bear witness to the constant stream of visitors to Weimar.

Once more, in 1819, Goethe's lyric genius burst forth with renewed vigour in *Der westöstliche Divan*. The spontaneous beauty with which he here gives voice to feelings that were by no means all imagined, shows with what difficulty Goethe grew old. The only indication that the lyrics of 1819 were not the creation of a young poet is the reflective tone that occasionally creeps in, and the apophthegmatic concentration of form in which he expresses his ripe wisdom. *Der Westöstliche Divan* is



an imitation of the *Divan* of the Persian poet Hafiz, which had been translated into German a few years previously, and it gave oriental poetry a vogue in Germany that lasted for forty years. *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*, which has already been discussed, followed in 1821, while the last years of Goethe's life were taken up with the completion of his life-work, *Faust*, the second part of which appeared in 1832, a few months after his death.

The position which *Faust* occupies in Goethe's life has no parallel in the life of any other of the world's great poets. A favourite theme of the writers of the “Sturm und Drang,” Faust's story had been familiar to Goethe from his earliest years onward; it must necessarily have attracted his attention in Leipzig, the town of “Auerbach's Keller,” and doubtless also during the months of convalescence in Frankfort, when he was interested in alchemy and magic. After the “Sturm und Drang” set in, *Faust* had the first place in Goethe's heart, and when he left Frankfort for Weimar in 1775, he took with him the play more or less completed in the form we now know as the *Urfaust*. In Weimar *Faust* was not forgotten, although in the early years little or nothing was added to it, and it accompanied the poet to Italy where one or two new scenes were written and the whole prepared for publication in 1790 as *Faust, ein Fragment*. In the following years, thanks to Schiller's stimulus and insistence, the yellowed manuscript of the poem was taken out once more, scenes were again added and the whole adapted to a wider scheme, whereby Faust's experiences were invested with a subtle problematic significance. In 1808 appeared the First Part. Slowly but with fewer interruptions, the Second Part took shape, reflecting as it progressed the various phases of Goethe's own later thought, his classicism and even his scientific interests. The final touches were not put to the work until the very last months of the poet's life.

A theme such as that of *Faust* is uniquely adapted to mirror the temperament of the German people: even in Reformation times, when the story first took form, it was

seized upon to embody the Germanic revolt against the spiritual fetters of catholicism, and to voice the sixteenth century's dreams of infinite power and infinite enjoyment. Under the "Sturm und Drang" Faust was again the "Übermensch," the rebel against laws divine and human, whose tragic fate is his quest for the unattainable; and in Goethe's hands this Faust becomes a still more complete impersonation of the aspiration of the eighteenth century. He is the "Stürmer und Dränger" who sets law at defiance, who will, as it were, merge the whole world in his "ego"; but he is at the same time imbued by Goethe with intellectual aspirations which effectually rule out those moral platitudes the earlier writers who had treated the theme were too ready to introduce. In Goethe's hands Faust is no criminal egoist; he has become the impersonation of man's most precious qualities. He has ceased to be the abnormally developed individual who merely tilts against the wall of law and convention, and has become a type of aspiring humanity. To give the play a still more universal significance, Goethe fitted it into a new framework, made it unroll, like a mystery-play of the Middle Ages, against a spiritual background in which Satan struggles with God for Faust's possession.

Faust, when the drama opens, has already exhausted all knowledge and wisdom; and the moment has come when he is ready to take leave of an existence, of the vanity of which he is convinced. In this moment it would seem as if a Divine force takes possession of him; Easter bells recall him to earth, the careless, happy holiday folk remind him of the ever-renewing vitality of humanity. The moment is ripe for Mephistopheles, that emissary of the powers of evil, who, after all, is but the servant of God, to present himself to Faust. A pact is made and signed in Faust's blood. Mephistopheles agrees to stand at Faust's command, to open up to him worlds of power and enjoyment, of which he has not even dreamed; and in return for this service, Faust signs himself away to Mephistopheles; but only on the condition that the latter succeeds in satiating him, in destroying

his will to dream, to strive, and to desire. Mephistopheles now proceeds to lead his victim through various forms of pleasure—the crude sensuality of the wine-house, the tragic passion for Gretchen, the sense-benumbing orgies of the Brocken—but without the expected result. The devil is still foiled; for the love with which Gretchen has inspired Faust, instead of dragging him down, as Mephistopheles had hoped, has filled him with a tragic restlessness against which his lures are powerless. With Gretchen's death in prison the First Part closes.

From the narrow world of personal joys and sufferings Faust passes in Part II. into the great world of humanity at large. He is no longer merely the strong individual with personal desires to satisfy; he has become symbolic of the race. At the court of the Kaiser, Mephistopheles introduces him to a motley life where manifold social questions are opened up; and at this court Faust, by virtue of a magic key, unlocks the door of antiquity. He conjures up Helen of Troy, and himself loves the phantom he has brought back to life. With the help of a small being, the “Homunculus,” a creation of alchemistic science, he makes his way back through the centuries to Greek antiquity, where he takes part in the “Klassische Walpurgisnacht,” the greatest possible contrast to the wild Germanic carnival on the Brocken in Part I. Amidst the classic harmony of the ancient world, Faust sees the real Helen; she takes refuge in his castle from the wrath of Menelaus. Faust and she are united, the romantic Germanic soul with the Greek ideal beauty; and from their union springs the child Euphorion, in whom Goethe allegorised Byron. Euphorion loses his brief life in the quest of too high an ideal; Helen vanishes into air and Faust is brought back by Mephistopheles into the real world, the world of political machinations, of diplomacy and war, of industry and commerce. Here Faust attains to what in Goethe's mind was the final goal of human life, a practical, beneficent activity; his mighty energy has won new land from the sea, and at his feet he sees a happy, flourishing community of active men. Faust

is now a hundred years old and cannot live much longer; Mephistopheles believes that the hour of his triumph has at last come, for there is nothing left for Faust to strive for. Moreover, sinister figures are approaching: Want, Guilt, Need, Care,—and Death himself is not far off. But the eternal striving in Faust's breast is still insatiable; he sinks into the grave convinced that the highest wisdom is summed up in the words, that life and freedom are only for him who daily conquers them anew. Only with death itself does the moment come when Faust can "bid the passing moment stay." Mephistopheles believes that his wager with God is won; he summons his devils to carry off his victim; but the angels of the heavenly host descend and do battle with roses for the soul of the eternal striver. Once again Goethe's magnificent imagination unfolds itself in the poetry of this last act, where Faust's soul passes upwards through the hierarchy of mediæval Christianity to the Virgin, at whose feet a penitent, the Gretchen of former days, intercedes for him.

Such was the fitting culmination to the life of Germany's greatest, most universal poet, who stood like a colossus amidst his age, whose work is an epitome of a whole century of Germany's literary history. It is sometimes, indeed, difficult to realise that this Goethe, who dominated the age of German classicism and saw Romanticism rise and fall, who lived into the modern era of steam and electricity, began his career in the Leipzig of Gottsched and was the leader of the "Sturm und Drang." When Goethe passed away in Weimar on the 22nd of March 1832, a great age in European letters had come to a close.

At the opening of the eighteenth century the German-speaking peoples were without a living literature they could call their own, and stood in abject spiritual slavery to France; that century left them as the leading intellectual force in Europe. From Canitz and Besser to Goethe and Schiller the vast distance was covered with miraculous rapidity, and almost within the span of a single generation. No wonder this eighteenth century was a feverish age in Germany; compared with it, the leisurely culture

of England, which accepted the displacement of Restoration ideals and the "return to nature" as a matter of course, or the overripe intellectualism of France with all her glorious memories of the "grand siècle," was the greatest possible contrast. The time-spirit was clearly no gentle, beneficent deity to Germany as it was to England, but rather a relentless Chronos, who devoured his children as he created them, and brought tragic disappointment to all but the very greatest thinkers and poets. Yet the process of evolution in Germany was not different from elsewhere, only more concentrated and more intense. As England and France, Germany had to take the step into the modern time which consisted in discarding classicism for naturalness; the step was a serious and even revolutionary one, but Germany succeeded in the end better than her neighbours in arriving at a solution of the problems of the eighteenth century. The supreme achievement of that century was neither England's material and political prosperity, nor France's great Revolution, but the humane classicism of Weimar.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## THE ROMANTIC MOVEMENT.

THE future of German poetry did not lie in that noble classicism with which the eighteenth century culminated, which Goethe and Schiller carried to its highest perfection in Weimar; the classic movement, having touched its zenith, exhausted itself, and had now to give place to another unclassic revival. Just as, a generation earlier, German individualism had asserted itself as "Sturm und Drang," so now at the beginning of the nineteenth century the same spirit appears again, this time as Romanticism. In her epochs of classicism Germany's influence on other literatures has been small out of all proportion to her achievements, but in periods like that of "Sturm und Drang" and Romanticism, that influence has been almost disproportionately great. Thus, on the threshold of the new century a little band of writers, none of them of the first order, promulgated a new doctrine which made the nineteenth century in the literatures of Europe a century of Romanticism.

This doctrine of Romanticism differed from that of the "Sturm und Drang" as impetuous youth differs from mature manhood; it was an individualism that had passed through a period of chastening humanism and enlightenment. The "Sturm und Drang" had been a German reproduction of the revolt of Rousseau and, above all things, iconoclastic; it aimed at destroying rather than building up; it spurned barriers and boundaries as inconvenient hindrances to the progress of the individual. The

new movement also demanded the utmost freedom for the individual; but its leaders based their claim not so much on personal needs as on an ordered conception of the universe, in which the individual faculties were to have the fullest room for development. They broke down, or, it may be, only bridged over, the barriers they found in their way, less with a view to gaining more freedom for themselves, as to arriving at a more perfect freedom of thinking and feeling for the world. They spurned the utilitarianism which confused art and morality, and had dominated the greater part of the eighteenth century; but they demanded, none the less, that life and art should be woven into one great harmonious whole, unhampered by conflicting ethics. They insisted that poetry was something universal and that it should permeate all domains of the intellectual life—religion, science, art; that art and music, poetry and painting, should blend together to form one comprehensive manifestation of the beautiful. In other words, the fundamental idea of German Romanticism might be stated summarily in the words: it was an attempt to create a harmony of intellect and heart, of life and art, on the basis of individualism.

The little school from which these vital and inspiring ideas emanated was formed in the year 1798, and—of all places—in the unromantic stronghold of the “Aufklärung,” Berlin. In that year Ludwig Tieck, together with the two brothers Schlegel and Friedrich von Hardenberg (“Novalis”), formulated the principles of the new movement, and the first number of the organ of the school, the *Athenäum* (1798-1800), was published. In the summer of the following year the Romantic School found a more congenial home in Jena; but before long its members were again scattered. Novalis died in 1801, and when, in 1804, Tieck left Germany for a lengthy stay in Italy, the Romantic School, as a school, had virtually come to an end.

Johann Ludwig Tieck (1773-1853), a native of Berlin, was the youngest member of the group, but he may be considered first as his work shows most clearly the tran-

sition from "Sturm und Drang" to Romanticism. Tieck began as a belated imitator of the "Stürmer und Dränger"; his first important work was a novel, *Geschichte des Herrn William Lovell* (1795-96), the hero of which, akin in temperament to Werther and Karl Moor, follows that downward course through guilt and crime which the novelists of the earlier movement loved to describe. The year after *William Lovell* was completed Tieck appeared in a different light; he produced a satiric comedy, *Der gestiefelte Kater* (1797), which ridiculed unsparingly the moralising family-comedies of Iffland and Kotzebue, into which the "domestic drama" of the seventies had degenerated. So far, Tieck's genius had been mainly active in a negative way, destroying the old order of things; the positive Romanticist in him was first awakened by a former school friend, W. H. Wackenroder (1773-98). Wackenroder, who was cut off at the early age of twenty-five, was one of those gentle, retiring natures to whom the Romantic School owed its most stimulating and revolutionary ideas. His *Herzensergiessungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders* (1797), an anonymously published little book, to which Tieck contributed a few essays, contains the germ of the Romantic conception of art; art here is not regarded analytically and critically as the product of ingenious minds, but as something divine, as an expression of religious feeling; in Wackenroder's eyes Raphael, the painter of madonnas, is the greatest of all painters. Similarly he pleads for music as an art no less intimately bound up with our spiritual life. In 1799, after Wackenroder's death, Tieck published another collection of essays, *Phantasien über die Kunst*, to which, however, he himself contributed about half the contents; and to Wackenroder's influence on Tieck we owe the first characteristically Romantic novel, *Franz Sternbalds Wanderungen* (1798). Tieck claimed the entire authorship, but the same inspiration lies clearly behind the book as lay behind the *Herzensergiessungen*. *Franz Sternbald* is a "Künstlerroman," and owes much to the fountainhead of the entire Romantic fiction, *Wilhelm Meister*. It is the



story of a gifted pupil of Albrecht Dürer, who wanders through Holland and Italy, meeting companions and adventures by the way. The meagre plot of the story is of small interest, but its author's youthful delight in nature and reverent attitude towards art and artists are refreshing after the feverish atmosphere of *William Lovell*. From the artist-novel Tieck passed to the "Märchen," or fairy-tale. *Der blonde Eckbert*, *Die schöne Magelone*, *Der getreue Eckart*, are charming examples of the purely Romantic fairy-tale, in which nature seems to enter into a mystic relationship with human life. These stories are equally far removed from the rationalistic fairy-tales of Musäus and the unvarnished stories of the people collected at a later period of the Romantic movement by the brothers Grimm.

But Tieck's chief interest lay in the drama, on which as a critic he had great influence, especially in his later years. His own serious dramas, notably *Leben und Tod der heiligen Genoveva* (1799) and *Kaiser Oktavianus* (1804), are examples of the Romantic drama in its most uncompromising form; they are lyric in the persistence with which the poet dwells on moods and feelings, and epic in the length and magnitude of their themes. There is poetry in them, Romantic, mediæval, mystic—but the true dramatic note is absent; the practical exigencies of the stage are ignored. Of foreign influences, that of Calderón is most conspicuous, a poet whom the Romanticists placed even higher than Shakespeare. Between 1799 and 1801 Tieck published a translation of another great Spanish work, the *Don Quixote* of Cervantes. The year 1804 formed a break in Tieck's life; in that year he went to Rome, and when he returned, two years later, Romanticism had entered upon a new phase. Tieck now settled in Dresden, and one of his first tasks here was to collect the stories of his earlier period and imbed them in a connecting narrative, making them appear to be told by a circle of friends: this collection appeared under the title *Phantasus* in 1812-16, and forms a marked contrast to the more realistic, matter-of-fact "Novellen" which he wrote

from about 1821 on. Tieck's work of this period—and he lived until the year 1853—belongs, however, to a later stage of the Romantic movement.

The greatest genius of the school was Friedrich von Hardenberg, better known by his pseudonym "Novalis" (1772-1801). A delicate consumptive, Hardenberg was neither mentally nor physically made for the prosaic world of everyday; the most exalted and spiritual of poets, he was often helpless as a child before the common facts and experiences of life. Abnormally sensitive to impressions, his poetic genius was awakened by love for a girl of twelve, whose death, three years later, plunged him into a despair which found lyric expression in the wonderful *Hymnen an die Nacht* (1800). In 1799 Novalis made the acquaintance of Tieck, who gave him the encouraging support he needed; and under Tieck's guidance his genius rapidly unfolded. But he had only two years to live, and neither of the two prose romances he has left us is finished.

*Die Lehrlinge zu Sais*, the first of these, has hardly emerged from the shadowy, embryonic stage; it is a panegyric—pantheistic and mystic—on the wonders of nature, the background for a novel rather than the actual beginnings of one. *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, published in 1802, is, on the other hand, the representative novel of the early Romantic movement. As a story, it, too, moves in a shadowy, unreal world of dreams and faery, of mysticism and allegory; its figures are no creatures of flesh and blood, nor are they intended to give an impression of reality; but the book is transfused by a subtle, spiritual poetry, which is to be found in so concentrated a form in no other work of German prose. Heinrich's apprenticeship to poetry, his initiation into its mysteries at the hands of Klingsohr, his tragic love, and his search for that "blue flower" in which the Romantic poets symbolised their goal, are all merely the outward and visible form in which the poet embodied a very real confession of his own spiritual adventures.

But the Romantic movement would have made but

art, but the appreciative "characterisation" of it. He brought to bear on literature an extraordinarily catholic knowledge and sympathy; he taught his countrymen how to appreciate poets and books far removed from them in space or time; for he had himself the power, which made him so brilliant a translator of Shakespeare and Calderón, of putting himself at the standpoint of contemporaries of the poets whom he criticised.

Schlegel's later life was somewhat chequered; for a time tutor to the sons of Madame de Staël, he had a direct influence on that writer's monumental work, *De l'Allemagne*, which in 1817 did so much to make German literature, and more especially German Romantic ideas, a force in Europe. From 1818 on Schlegel was professor in the University of Bonn, where he devoted himself mainly to oriental studies. He died in 1845.

Friedrich Schlegel (1772-1829) was also a critic, but he was the complement rather than the rival of his brother. In the art of lucid interpretation he was his brother's inferior; but he had a more original mind and an even wider outlook upon literature. He was particularly attracted by what we should now call comparative literature, by questions of æsthetics and of the relations of poetry to life and art. His early studies were devoted to the classics, and his first important book, *Die Griechen und Römer* (1797), was clearly influenced by Schiller's ideas on classic and modern literature. In the *Fragmente* which he contributed to the *Athenäum*, he formulated in brilliant aphorisms the principles of the Romantic School. Like his brother, he turned in later life to oriental studies, and his work *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier* (1808) helped to lay the foundation for modern oriental studies. As a creative writer, Friedrich Schlegel is mainly remembered by a fragmentary novel, *Lucinde*, which appeared in 1799. Crude almost to unreadableness, *Lucinde* is a product of the Romantic ethical theory; it is an attempt to introduce those theories of individual freedom which were part of the Romantic creed, into

the ordinary relations of everyday life. But what to the best of Schlegel's contemporaries appeared as a serious contribution to social theory, reads now only as an impeachment of Romantic immorality and extravagance. More pleasing is the unfinished romance, *Florentin* (1801), written by Friedrich Schlegel's wife, Dorothea (1763-1839), who was a daughter of the philosopher Moses Mendelssohn, and, like her sister-in-law Caroline, one of the brilliant women of the Romantic circle.

Romanticism, in so far as it sought to vitalise poetry by bringing it into touch with art and thought and life, was thus far from being purely a literary movement; it was, above all, a power in philosophy and religion. In its philosophy it owed much, no doubt, to the great thinker of the transition period, Fichte, but the chief exponent of Romantic metaphysics was F. W. J. von Schelling (1775-1854). The Romantic poets found in Schelling's writings an echo of their own attitude towards nature; and the spiritualisation of nature, which is so constant a feature in the writings of Tieck and Novalis, became in Schelling's hands a philosophical dogma. No less sympathetic to the Romanticists was the mysticism which arose out of Schelling's glorification of art as the perfect union of nature and spirit in the "Weltseele." And what Schelling did for the philosophy of Romanticism, F. E. D. Schleiermacher (1768-1834), who was for a time preacher in Berlin, and subsequently professor in Halle, did for its religion. But while Schelling's work was only too soon eclipsed by the philosophy of Hegel, Schleiermacher's spiritualisation of the dogmatic systems of the theologians had a long-lasting influence on the religious life of the nineteenth century. His two little volumes, *Reden über die Religion* (1799) and *Monologen* (1800), helped materially to discredit the "Aufklärung" and to establish German religious thinking, catholic as well as protestant, on a new and healthier basis in which metaphysics had no part. It was not Schleiermacher's fault that the poets of the time chiefly employed his ideas to further a revival of mediæval catholicism.

The very brief life of the first Romantic School showed that, fruitful and germinating as its ideas were, it failed to adapt itself to the practical needs of the German people; and its mediæval and catholic tendencies only emphasised its exclusiveness. It was not to this school, but to a later group of writers, associated with Heidelberg, that we owe the identification of Romanticism with the national ideals. It is true, these younger Romanticists, Brentano, Arnim, Görres, also loved the Middle Ages, and their poetic work was distinctly anti-protestant in its tendencies; but they had the art, which their predecessors lacked, of bringing their ideas into vital relations with the time. Their conception of poetry was wide enough to embrace the German peasant and his Volkslieder, and actual enough to identify Romanticism with German patriotism.

Clemens Maria Brentano (1778-1842), whose father was an Italian, spurned with Romantic fervour the commercial career for which he was destined. He became a student at Jena, where, intoxicated with the new faith, he spent the next few years realising the Romantic ideals in his own life. The literary result was a strange, unbalanced novel, *Godwi* (1801), in which the motives of the older Romantic School, as they had appeared in books like *William Lovell* and *Lucinde*, are reproduced in incongruous connections, the story being interspersed with songs and ballads in imitation of the Volkslied. In 1803 Brentano married and a year later settled in Heidelberg, where he was soon joined by Ludwig Achim von Arnim (1781-1831). Arnim was a North German, a native of Berlin, and in every respect a contrast to Brentano. Stolid and serious, his youth had been uninfluenced by the irresponsible Romanticism of the time, and was spent in the study of natural science. He turned to literature comparatively late, and began by writing novels and sketches, in which he showed skill and originality in utilising in a Romantic way the experiences he had gathered on his travels, which had extended as far as Scotland; in this respect Arnim is not unworthy to be regarded as a German precursor of

Sir Walter Scott. His first ambitious work, *Hollins Liebeleben*, appeared in 1802; it was subsequently incorporated in *Gräfin Dolores*, which is, on the whole, the most interesting novel he produced during his stay in Heidelberg.

The third of the little group of Heidelberg Romantists, J. J. von Görres (1776-1848), was a thinker and scholar of stimulating, suggestive ideas rather than a poet. The lectures he held at Heidelberg in the years 1806 to 1808 provided a theoretical background for the new development of Romanticism. It is significant that this phase of the movement was associated not merely with the romantic town of Heidelberg, but also with its university. The Romantic ideas were now beginning to influence academic learning; and the revival of scholarship—and more especially of philological scholarship—at the German universities was intimately bound up with the literary movement.

As the older School had, as its literary organ, the *Athenäum*, so the younger Heidelberg group had its *Zeitung für Einsiedler* (1808), or, as it was later called, *Trösteinsamkeit*; and this journal, short-lived as it was, won new friends and adherents for the movement all over Germany. The chief work we owe to the Heidelberg School is the collection of *Volkslieder* edited by Arnim and Brentano in 1805 and 1808, under the title *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*. Herder, it will be remembered, had, on the model of the *Percy Ballads*, made the first modern collection of *Volkslieder* in Germany, but Herder's collection was only to a limited extent German; he rather prided himself on his cosmopolitanism in gathering examples of popular song from the remotest quarters of Europe. *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, on the other hand, is purely national and German. Neither Brentano nor Arnim had lyric talent of the first order, but they both possessed that passivity of artistic temperament which reflects and reproduces impressions with accuracy; they had—and this, in spite of the accusation that has been brought against them, that they tampered unduly with

the texts of their *Volkslieder*—the power of reproducing not merely the words of these popular songs, but also their peculiar atmosphere. *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* has become Germany's greatest song-book, and its influence may be followed on the entire German lyric of the nineteenth century.

No less important was the activity of the school in other fields of popular literature. In 1807 Görres published his collection of *Die deutschen Volksbücher*, and in 1812-15 the brothers Grimm their *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, followed in 1816-18 by *Deutsche Sagen*. Here the method of the *Wunderhorn* was transferred to the stories of the people, and of these three collections, Grimm's fairy-tales, at least, have become an abiding possession of the German people. If the translation of Shakespeare is to be called the crowning achievement of the first Romantic School, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* and Grimm's *Märchen* are assuredly those of the second. Jakob (1785-1863) and Wilhelm Grimm (1786-1859), both natives of Hanau, were the founders of modern German philology as a science. With Jakob Grimm's *Deutsche Grammatik* (1819-37), *Deutsche Rechtsaltertümer* (1828), and *Deutsche Mythologie* (1835), above all, with the monumental *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, begun by both brothers together in 1852, and still unfinished, a solid basis was laid for the study of the German language and the German past.

Meanwhile, however, the Romantic circle in Heidelberg had become scattered; Arnim and Brentano both left Heidelberg in 1808 and settled in Berlin, where, together with a number of new writers, notably Fouqué, Chamisso, and Eichendorff, they inaugurated a third stage in the development of the Romantic movement. As far as original work was concerned, this third period of Romanticism was more productive than either of its predecessors. Arnim has left a number of dramas which contain a wealth of imaginative poetry, but are even less suited for the stage than Tieck's; his novels, however, have real and abiding worth. *Armut, Reichtum, Schuld*

*und Busse der Gräfin Dolores* (1809), *Isabella von Ägypten* (1812), and especially the admirable historical novel, *Die Kronenwächter*, of which a fragment consisting of only two books was published in 1817, are good examples of Arnim's powers as a novelist. His strength lies in his narrative style; he has something of that peculiar power of holding the reader's attention by picturesque presentment, which Scott possessed in so high a degree; on the other hand, the stories themselves suffer from the Romantic lack of dramatic concentration. A more magnificent theme than that of *Die Kronenwächter* would be hard to find. The "crown guardians" are a mysterious society which seeks out descendants of the Hohenstaufen dynasty, so dear to all Romantic souls, that these may one day revive the glories of the German Empire. The story takes place in the sixteenth century, and historical figures, like Maximilian, Luther, Faust, cross Arnim's pages. But admirably imagined as all this is, the actual happenings fail to grip us as in a writer with a firmer hold on reality they could hardly have failed to do. In 1811 Arnim married Brentano's sister Bettina, whose correspondence with Goethe has already been mentioned. Bettina von Arnim was one of the many gifted women of the Romantic circle, but as she published nothing until after her husband's death in 1831, her work may more conveniently be dealt with in a subsequent chapter.

Amongst Brentano's other writings two short stories, *Geschichte vom braven Kasperl und dem schönen Annerl* (1817), and the oriental fairy-tale, *Gockel, Hinkel und Gackeleia* (1838), are still popular. His *Romanzen vom Rosenkranz* (1852) is an allegorical poem, or collection of poems, on episodes from the poet's own life and those of his friends. Reality is here blended with catholic legend and with motives from Dante, the whole making the impression of some pre-Raphaelite mosaic; we marvel at its sustained power and beauty; but it is too artificially archaic to have much meaning for the modern world. The same is true of Brentano's long dramatic version of the



saga of Libussa, *Die Gründung Prags* (1815). Here again there is no questioning Brentano's mastery of the art of verse; there are wonderful scenes in this play, such as only the untheatrical dramatists of Romanticism could conceive, scenes in which the workings of the soul are, as it were, projected on the screen of nature. But, in spite of all this, *Die Gründung Prags* has meant as little for the history of dramatic literature as any other of the uncompromising dramas of the Romanticists. Brentano's catholicism narrowed as he grew older; he became, if not a fanatic for his faith, yet so thoroughly immersed in catholic mysticism as to lose all touch with the outside world. Long before he died in 1842 he had ceased to be a force in German literature.

The lyric genius of the circle of Berlin Romanticists was a young French nobleman, L. C. A. de Chamisso, known to German literature as Adelbert von Chamisso (1781-1838). Chamisso, whose family had fled from Champagne at the Revolution, had scientific interests, and between 1815 and 1818 he made a voyage round the world; on his return he was appointed curator of the Royal Botanical collections in Berlin. He had contributed poems to Berlin almanachs early in the century, but his first collected edition of *Gedichte* did not appear until 1831. It is one of the freaks of literary history that this French aristocrat should have become one of the most German of German poets; his gentle sentimentality, his delight in the simple joys of the people, have made many of his songs, such as the cycle *Frauenliebe und Leben* (1831), genuine Volkslieder; and his ballads (*Die Giftmischerin*, 1828; *Die Löwenbraut*, 1829; *Salas y Gomez*, 1830; *Mateo Falcone*, 1830), although lacking in the dramatic notes of a Schiller or Uhland, have all the high lights of Romanticism. Chamisso is also the author of one of the most popular tales of the century, *Peter Schlemihls wundersame Geschichte* (1814), the story of the man who sells his shadow to the devil and gets into all kinds of difficulties owing to the want of it. The simplicity of Chamisso's artless

narrative, combined, as it is, with realistic touches, reminds one at times of the great Danish fairy-tale writer, H. C. Andersen.

The chief lyric singer of this third phase of Romanticism was hardly associated personally with the Berlin circle. Joseph von Eichendorff (1788-1857) was a Silesian, whose poetic genius had been kindled in Heidelberg. He served as a soldier in the War of Liberation, and when the war was over, entered the government service, rising rapidly to high and responsible positions in Danzig, Königsberg, and Berlin. He retired from the public service in 1845 and died in 1857. In his lyric poetry (*Gedichte*, 1837) Eichendorff is to be seen at his best. His range of expression is not as wide as Goethe's or Heine's, but within its limitations it is perfect. He is, like all the Romantic lyric poets, essentially a poet of nature, and he possesses in a peculiar degree the art of attuning human emotions to nature's moods; he is the poet of the German forest, whose magic voices sang round his cradle and accompanied him all through his life. Eichendorff's dramatic attempts were ineffective, and his literary criticism (*Die neue romantische Poesie in Deutschland*, 1847) was coloured by his catholicism. But as a novelist he occupies a position of some importance. His first novel, *Ahnung und Gegenwart* (1815), stands in the direct line of the evolution of the Romantic novel from *Wilhelm Meister* as starting-point; but, as with most of the Romantic novels, the achievement falls considerably short of the intention. *Ahnung und Gegenwart* is more a record of subjective emotions and moods than a novel; it has little construction of any kind and hardly any connecting thread. A second novel, *Dichter und ihre Gesellen* (1834), has even less homogeneity. On the other hand, Eichendorff has left one masterpiece as a prose writer, in the little story, *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts* (1826), one of the gems of Romantic fiction. A story it hardly is, being merely the description of a young musician's romantic wanderings; but into this little book Eichendorff poured all the poetry of his

own inimitable *Wanderlieder*, his dreamy delight in nature and his yearning for Italy, that goal of all Romantic souls.

To the three centres of Romantic activity, Jena, Heidelberg, and Berlin, might be added a fourth, Dresden. We can hardly speak of a Dresden "school," but the chief dramatist of the age, Kleist, was for a brief period of his career associated with this town. In the editing of his journal *Phöbus*, which he published here, Kleist was assisted by Adam H. Müller (1779-1829), who, together with his friend Friedrich von Gentz (1764-1832), illustrates the reactionary influence of the early Romantic movement, when applied to the sphere of practical politics; both these men entered the service of Austria and became apologists of the Metternich *régime*. The same tendency in Romanticism which led back to the catholic church, tended to a suppression of liberal ideas in politics and a return to absolutism.

Before leaving this period of Romantic ascendancy, we have to consider a group of poets who, although not connected immediately with any of the schools or centres, yet supplemented the patriotic ideals of the Heidelberg writers. These are the poets of the "Befreiungskrieg," the young singers who inspired and celebrated Germany's national rising against Napoleon. Chief among these were three: Körner, Arndt, and Schenkendorf.

Karl Theodor Körner (1791-1813) was a son of Schiller's best friend, and the most precocious of the three. Any other form of comparison is difficult, for Körner died a soldier's death as a member of Lützow's volunteer corps at the age of twenty-three. And yet, young as he was, he had already written a number of dramas in the manner of Schiller and of Kotzebue; the best of these, *Zriny* (1812), has, however, more of Schiller's rhetoric than his poetry. In 1814, after his death, his father published his patriotic war songs under the title *Leier und Schwert*. It is always difficult for a later generation to appreciate the patriotic lyric called forth by a special event or circumstance, and it is particularly difficult in the present

case to understand the enthusiasm which Körner's songs evoked. One might again say of them what Lessing said of Gleim's patriotic lyric: the patriot's voice has drowned the poet's; and doubtless the heroic career of the young soldier was an important factor in the popularity of his songs. Ernst Moritz Arndt (1769-1860) has greater claims for serious consideration in a history of literature; he was an older and maturer man in 1813. His poems appeared in a collected edition in 1818. As a patriotic singer he renewed, we might say, the protestant war song of the Thirty Years' War—that is to say, he combined the best traditions of the German Volkslied with the sturdy protestantism of Luther; to him patriotism and protestantism were one; his nature was at bottom deeply religious. As a prose writer Arndt is equally important. His work on the Napoleonic era, *Der Geist der Zeit* (1806-18), is an invaluable document of the time, laying bare the hidden springs of the national rising, a rising which was not merely a revolt against a foreign oppressor, but also the vindication of the German nation as a nation. Less immediately stimulating than either Körner or Arndt, Maximilian von Schenkendorf (1783-1817) was a more gifted lyric poet than either. He had more, too, of the historic sense of the Romanticists; he looked back to the mediæval glories of the old Roman Empire as well as forward to a new, united German empire. He was Romantic, too, in so far as he brought the poetry of mediævalism into the service of patriotism.

These three men were the chief patriotic poets of 1813; but there were many others, such as Friedrich Rückert and Hoffmann von Fallersleben, who, although their real work belongs to a later epoch, began their careers amidst the enthusiasm of this year. 1813 was, in fact, a year of the greatest significance for the history of Romanticism; for it marked the triumph of that national and patriotic movement which had been initiated by the Heidelberg school; but it also formed the starting-point for a new development, realistic and modern, which, as the years moved on, had less and less to say to the

unworldly idealism of Romanticism. The decay of Romanticism as a literary force began with the fall of Napoleon, not because that movement was indifferent or antagonistic to the national triumph, which it certainly was not; but because the growing self-confidence of the German people brought with it more pressing practical interests and duties, and these inevitably pressed the old Romantic dreams into the background.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## THE DRAMA UNDER ROMANTIC INFLUENCE.

NOTWITHSTANDING the fact that the first Romantic School had translated and interpreted Shakespeare, that the poet to whom they gave the first place, Calderón, was a dramatist, and that the Romantic critics busied themselves incessantly with the theatre, they produced no great, or even eminent, dramatic poet: the drama of the School might never have been written and German literature would not have been appreciably the poorer; certainly the German stage would not. The dramatists who put their stamp upon the Romantic age all stood outside the Romantic coteries; they had no belief in Tieck's or Brentano's impracticable ideals of a non-theatrical drama; and were obliged by the very nature of their craft to keep in touch with the stage. Not the Romantic drama, but the drama under Romantic influence, was the dominating force in the theatre of the nineteenth century. Schiller himself, as we have seen, had written Romantic plays, the greatest of all Romantic tragedies, the first part of Goethe's *Faust* appeared in 1808, and the entire dramatic production of Germany from Kleist to Hebbel and Ludwig stood under Romantic influence.

Zacharias Werner (1768-1823) was, of all the dramatists now to be considered, most deeply immersed in the Romantic stream. He was born at Königsberg and, after a dissolute and unsettled life, ended his days as a priest and popular preacher in Vienna. He had already attracted attention as a playwright before Schiller's death,

with a strange Romantic play, *Die Söhne des Tales*, in two parts, entitled respectively, *Die Templer auf Cypern* and *Die Kreuzesbrüder* (1803). The subject is the fall of the order of the Templars and the establishment of a new order of "sons of the valley" in their place; it afforded Werner an opportunity for displaying that combination of religious fervour and theatrical mysticism in which he revelled. His second play, *Das Kreuz an der Ostsee* (1806), is dramatically an advance on his first; it is, moreover, patriotic as well as historical; for Werner, with all his Romanticism, was keenly sensitive to the humiliation of his country under Napoleon. *Das Kreuz an der Ostsee*—its theme is the struggle of the Teutonic Knights against the Slavs—was planned as the first of a cycle of patriotic dramas drawn from Prussian history. Werner's next play leapt over centuries, to the Reformation; *Martin Luther, oder die Weihe der Kraft* (1807), had the greatest success of all his dramas, a success which, a few years later, when Werner became a convert to catholicism, he regretted. More significant, however, was a little one-act tragedy, *Der vierundzwanzigste Februar* (performed 1810, published 1815), which shows an extraordinary command of weird effects. It forms the connecting link between Schiller's *Braut von Messina* and the "Schicksalstragödien," or "fate tragedies," in which a curse or fate overhanging the characters is associated with a definite day and a fatal weapon.

The chief "fate dramatist" was Adolf Müllner (1774-1829), who was an advocate by profession. In 1812 he produced *Der neunundvierzigste Februar*, an imitation of Werner's play, in which, however, there is more theatrical than tragic effect. A year later appeared at Vienna his typical "fate drama," *Die Schuld*, which for a time was exceedingly popular in all German theatres. *Die Schuld* is not without gleams of poetry of a kind, but the impression it makes is rather that of a skilfully constructed criminal melodrama. A young Spaniard, who, according to a prophecy, is to kill his brother, is brought up in the north of Europe, but returns to his native land;

to win the woman he loves, he kills her husband on a hunting expedition, and the dead man turns out to be his own brother. *Die Schuld* is written in the trochaic measure of the Spanish drama, a measure which Grillparzer employed with wonderful effect in the greatest of all the "fate tragedies," *Die Ahnfrau* (1817). Müllner wrote other plays and was for a time an influential journalist; but he had exhausted all that he had to say to his age as a poet in *Die Schuld*, and from that tragedy the later "fate dramatists" borrow freely. The general tendency, however, as is to be seen from such plays as *Der Leuchtturm* (1821) and *Das Bild* (1821) by C. E. von Houwald (1778-1845), was to sentimentalise the tragic motives and adapt them to the shallow theatrical purposes of Kotzebue.

The first master of the drama in the period after Schiller's death was Heinrich von Kleist, who was born at Frankfurt-on-the-Oder on October 18, 1777. He came of a military family, and was brought up amidst military surroundings that were distasteful to him; he wandered restlessly first to Paris, then to Switzerland. Even when he was fairly launched on a literary career and had gained confidence in his genius, his work met with no general recognition; Goethe, in what was the one serious misjudgment of his life, saw in him only a poet of mediocre talent. Life remained to the end an insoluble riddle to Kleist; he was torn asunder by unhappy love-affairs, and in November 1811 he put an end to his life on the shore of the Wannsee near Berlin. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that the work he has left us should contrast strangely with the classic poetry of Weimar. He began with a turbulent, unbalanced tragedy, *Die Familie Schroffenstein* (1803), which, were it not for an infusion of distinctly Romantic ideas, might have come straight from the "Sturm und Drang" of the previous generation. *Amphitryon* (1807), again, is a Romantic adaptation of Molière's play of that name: *Penthesilea* (1808), a lurid tragedy of the Homeric age, in which love, hate, and scorn are projected as on a screen in superhuman proportions.



The dramas that followed were less stormy. *Der zerbrochene Krug* (1808, published 1811), a one-act comedy centring in a village trial over a broken jar, is a masterpiece of its kind, one of the few German comedies of the first rank. *Das Käthchen von Heilbrunn, oder die Feuerprobe* (1810), is a bustling Romantic drama, recalling the "Ritterdramen" which originated with Götz von Berlichingen. But the mediævalism of Kleist's play is, again, unmistakably Romantic, and not of the "Sturm und Drang"; the love which inspires his Käthchen to follow the Ritter vom Strahl is more akin to that of Goethe's Mignon than of his Maria. The plot of the play is inept and even absurd; it is not even as good as that of many of the despised "Ritterromane"; but its crudities are atoned for and ennobled by the wealth of poetry with which Kleist has surrounded it. *Die Hermannsschlacht* (1808, not published till 1821) is, again, a tragedy in Kleist's intense manner; its theme, the heroic struggles of the Germans under Arminius against the Roman legions at the dawn of German history, serves, however, only as a cloak for Kleist's patriotic hatred of the French oppressor of Germany. His dramatic masterpiece is *Der Prinz von Homburg* (1810, first published 1821). This historical drama, in which history is perhaps made unduly subservient to poetry, sets out from the historical fact that Prince Friedrich von Homburg won the battle of Fehrbellin in 1675 in disobedience to the commands of the Elector of Brandenburg. The prince is condemned to die; the Elector refuses to entertain the pleading of his niece Nathalie, who loves the prince, and even of the whole army. The half-intrepid, half-cowardly young man is awakened to a sense of responsibility and the need of military discipline, as soon as the Elector places the decision of his fate in his own hands; Friedrich frankly recognises the justice of his sentence and, in doing so, wins the Elector's pardon. With *Der Prinz von Homburg* Kleist has given Prussia her greatest national drama.

Kleist was also a novelist; two volumes containing eight *Erzählungen* appeared in 1810 and 1811. The best of these, and one of the finest novels of its time, is the powerful story of *Michael Kohlhaas*. Kohlhaas was a historical personage, a horse-dealer of the sixteenth century, who in sullen determination to obtain justice from a nobleman who has taken advantage of him, brings his country to the brink of civil war; and he ultimately lays his head on the block with the proud conviction that the deed for which he does penance has helped towards improving the justice of the world. The spirit of this story, which is told in a straightforward, realistic way, is very different from the dreamy passivity of the Romanticists, and reveals something of the forces which underlay the revolt against Napoleon.

But Kleist, who thus opened up new possibilities of development for the German drama, failed to win the sympathy of the Romantic critics, as he failed to convince the classicists that Schiller had not said the last word in dramatic poetry. Meanwhile the North German drama on Romantic lines did not rise above mediocrity. The historical drama was particularly in favour, owing to the stimulus which the later Romantic movement had given to the study of the national past; F. L. G. von Raumer's *Geschichte der Hohenstaufen und ihrer Zeit* (1823-25) was an inexhaustible mine for the dramatists of the period. From this source Ernst von Raupach (1784-1852) constructed a series of no less than twenty-four historical dramas, which, however, show little originality and very modest poetic attainment. A much more gifted playwright of the epoch, C. D. Grabbe (1801-36), whose unbalanced, dissolute life recalls the careers of the early "Stürmer und Dränger," also planned a cycle of Hohenstaufen dramas, of which, however, only two were completed, *Kaiser Friedrich Barbarossa* (1829) and *Kaiser Heinrich VI.* (1830). Better known is Grabbe's bold imaginative flight in his *Don Juan und Faust* (1829), a grandiose attempt to weld together two themes

with which Mozart and Goethe had already familiarised their countrymen. Admirable, too, both in construction and sharpness of dramatic characterisation, is Grabbe's Napoleonic drama, *Napoleon, oder die hundert Tage* (1831). Without doubt, Grabbe was the strongest dramatic talent that North Germany produced between Kleist and Hebbel.

But the real home of the German drama in the earlier nineteenth century was Vienna; the great Hofburgtheater in Vienna maintained undisputed all through the century its leading position in the German-speaking world. The Hapsburgs had done much by liberal patronage to help their theatre into this position at the close of the eighteenth century, but the real secret of its success lay in the dramatic instincts of the Viennese people. The Austrians are in this respect the most gifted of the German races, and since early in the eighteenth century a living Viennese popular drama had existed quite independently of the literary drama. In its general culture, however, Austria lagged considerably behind North Germany, even at the zenith of the classical period: H. J. von Collin (1771-1811), for instance, the first prominent Austrian dramatist at the opening of the century, had closer ties with the earlier classical or pseudo-classical drama than with Schiller. Collin's first drama, *Regulus*, a severely classical play, was received with extravagant favour in 1801,—a favour which seems to have blinded Collin's countrymen to the higher merits of his later plays, *Coriolan* (1804) and *Bianca della Porta* (1808). His fame, however, soon grew pale before the rapid improvement of Austrian taste, the greater familiarity with Schiller, above all, before the rise of an Austrian dramatist of the very first rank in Franz Grillparzer.

Grillparzer's life was tragic, not as Werner's or Grabbe's had been, owing to a want of moral balance, but in a negative and passive way: not temperament, but the lack of a strong individuality and an energetic will, was the rock on which Grillparzer made shipwreck; he endured and renounced where a strong man would have asserted

himself and rebelled. It is this peculiarity in Grillparzer that makes him so unique a figure in the modern dramatic literature of Europe. The antithesis of a Schiller or Victor Hugo, he gave the Europe of the age of pessimism a drama which corresponded better to its spiritual needs and reflected more faithfully its spiritual conflicts. Franz Grillparzer was born in Vienna on January 15, 1791; the associations of his childhood and boyhood made him always look back on the spacious, liberal era of Joseph II. as a kind of golden age; for it was the tragedy of Grillparzer's life that he had to spend his best years under the crushing tyranny of the *régime* of Prince Metternich. Except for journeys to Italy, to Germany, where he made Goethe's acquaintance, to France and England, and to Greece, his career was the uneventful one of a Viennese government official. He ultimately rose to be director of the Imperial Archive, a position which he retained until 1856, long after he had ceased to take an active interest in the theatre. His death took place at Vienna on January 21, 1872.

Like Schiller, Grillparzer leapt into fame with his first play; *Die Ahnfrau* was produced in 1817 in Vienna, and made so deep and lasting an impression that Grillparzer was, all his life long, associated with the group of "fate dramatists." But *Die Ahnfrau*, in spite of its ghostly, romantic subject—an ancestress, who for a crime committed in life is doomed to haunt the family until her last descendant is extinct, and a robber-lover, who turns out to be the brother of his betrothed,—is a powerful tragedy, and has more in common with Schiller's *Braut von Messina* and Shakespeare's *Macbeth* than with the tawdry "fate tragedies" of Müllner. The command of dramatic effect in this tragedy is the more surprising when we compare it with *Blanka von Castilien*, a verbose experiment in the style of *Don Carlos*, on which Grillparzer had practised his hand a year or two before. In 1818 appeared *Sappho*, a play on avowedly classic lines, the poet hoping that he might remove with it the impression that he belonged to a school of dramatists he despised. *Sappho* is the

tragedy of genius; the Greek poetess realises that the price of fame is the renunciation of earthly love and happiness. Classic, too, is Grillparzer's next work, the trilogy of *Das goldene Vliess* (1820). In agreement with an opinion which Schiller, unknown to Grillparzer, had once expressed about the theme to Goethe, he dramatised, as none of his many predecessors had attempted to do, the whole saga of the Argonauts, the love and hate of Jason and Medea from the beginning, and not merely the final catastrophe in Medea's life. *Der Gastfreund*, the first part of *Das goldene Vliess*, is in one act, and describes the fatal murder of Phryxus by Medea's father; this crime clings like a curse to the Fleece and brings misery and death to all through whose hands it passes. In *Die Argonauten* Jason comes to Colchis in search of the Fleece; he sees Medea, loves her, and with her aid secures the coveted trophy; she returns with him to Greece as his wife. In the third drama of the trilogy, *Medea*, Grillparzer brings the conflict between husband and wife, which he has thus carefully prepared, into touch with quite modern ethical problems. Weak and vacillating, Jason cannot face the scorn that his barbarian wife draws down on him in Corinth; he turns away from her to find a gentler partner in Kreusa, daughter of the Corinthian king. In revenge for the wrong—of which we are better able to judge from Grillparzer's work than from other *Medea* dramas, for we have known Medea as a girl in Colchis—Medea slays her children and sets the palace on fire. At the close of the tragedy she takes a last farewell of Jason, to bear the symbol of evil, the Golden Fleece, back to Delphi, whence it came.

With *Das goldene Vliess*, or at least with *Medea*, Grillparzer won a place for himself in the first rank of dramatic poets. In his next two works he turned to the historical drama. *König Ottokars Glück und Ende* (1825) is in Austrian literature what *Der Prinz von Homburg* is in Prussian, the representative national tragedy; it has even been claimed, and with considerable justice, as the greatest

historical tragedy of the nineteenth century. The theme of the drama is the rise and fall of Ottokar of Bohemia in his vain struggle against Rudolf of Hapsburg. With greater originality than Kleist, Grillparzer has here broken with the historical style of Schiller and created a tragedy which combines faithfulness to the spirit of history and to the psychology of character, with ideas of the poet's own time, a time that was dominated by the rise and fall of a mightier than Ottokar—Napoleon. Grillparzer's second historical tragedy, *Ein treuer Diener seines Herrn* (1828), the story of the Hungarian Bankban's almost inhuman self-effacement in the service of his king, gave the poet an opportunity of depicting in its most ruthless aspects that eternal conflict between will and duty which was so real to himself.

Once more in *Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen* (1831), Grillparzer returned to Greek antiquity; the subject is the love-story of Hero and Leander, as related by the late Greek poet Musæus. Into this, the most Romantic of all the sagas that have come down to us from antiquity, Grillparzer introduced a very modern element of psychological analysis. Love converts the passive, irresolute Leander, who has caught a glimpse of Hero within the precincts of her temple, into a man of all too daring action; while Hero develops from the naïve child to a heroine of tragic dignity. The scene in Hero's cell after Leander has swum the Hellespont is, in its naïve sincerity and poetic truth, one of the most beautiful love-scenes in modern dramatic literature. On a second attempt to swim across, a storm arises, the guiding light in Hero's window is treacherously extinguished, and the waves of the sea triumph over those of love. Next morning Leander's body is washed up on the shore, and Hero dies of grief. *Der Traum ein Leben* (1834), Grillparzer's next drama, was begun as early as 1817, and is written in the same Spanish trochaic verse which he employed so effectively in *Die Ahnfrau*. As Calderón had, in the play *La vida es sueño*—in German, *Das Leben ein Traum*—which suggested Grillparzer's title, depicted a prince

who believes that the life he lives is a dream, so here Rustan, an ambitious country youth, is made to see in a dream his overweening ambitions realised. With his uncle's slave Zanga at his side, he sees himself saving the life of the King of Samarcand, and rapidly rising into favour at the latter's court; but his success is attained by deceit and crime. He is ultimately unmasked, and, fleeing for his life, awakens at the critical moment. The nightmare has taught him that quietist faith which the Metternich *régime* had engrained in the Austrian people, that peace of soul and contentment with one's lot are the only ideals worth striving for.

Schopenhauer's philosophy and had felt the spell of Wagner's masterpieces, first discovered the great poet in Grillparzer; only within the last two decades has his genius been generally recognised.

There were many other Austrian dramatists in the first half of the nineteenth century, but only a few can be mentioned here. E. F. J. von Münch-Bellinghausen (1806-71), writing under the pseudonym of "Friedrich Halm," enjoyed a greater reputation in his day than Grillparzer; but his work, like that of his predecessor Collin, was only of ephemeral interest. Plays like *Der Sohn der Wildnis* (1842) and *Der Fechter von Ravenna* (1854) are, to modern taste, disfigured by an effeminate sentimentality and a lack of poetic seriousness. A finer, if also somewhat evanescent talent was that of Eduard von Bauernfeld (1802-90), who in his long series of comedies gave admirable pictures of the Viennese life of his time. His strength lies in the fineness and delicacy of his workmanship, but his talent was not robust enough to assert itself beside the undisguised striving after effect in the imported French comedy. The Austrian taste for the Spanish drama, which Grillparzer shared and helped to foster, is seen in the hold which the Spanish drama had and still has on the Viennese stage. Joseph Schreyvogel (1768-1832), the first important director of the Hofburg-theater, translated under the pseudonym of "C. A. West" dramas by Calderón and Moreto, which are still in the German repertory, and *Der Stern von Sevilla* (1830) and *Kerker und Krone* (1834), once popular plays by J. C. von Zedlitz (1790-1862), were strongly influenced by Spanish models.

The best tribute to the dramatic genius of the Viennese is their "Volksdrama," or popular drama. The "Wiener Posse," a distinctly Austrian development of the Italian "commedia dell' arte," and consequently akin to the older English pantomime, had a large number of talented writers in its service at the beginning of the nineteenth century; and to the tradition which they created belong the works of two playwrights of genius,



Ferdinand Raimund (1790-1836) and Johann Nestroy (1801-62). After Grillparzer, Raimund is the most original dramatic genius that Austria has produced; by temperament moody and misanthropic, by profession a comic actor at a Viennese suburban theatre, Raimund shot himself in a fit of melancholy at the age of forty-six. His literary significance lies in the fact that he invested the traditional "Posse" with a poetic seriousness hitherto lacking in it; *Der Bauer als Millionär* (1826), and above all, *Der Alpenkönig und der Menschenfeind* (1828) and *Der Verschwender* (1833) are creations of a natural genius that has been little influenced by higher literary considerations, but they deserve a place beside the best German comedies of the century. A very different type of writer was Nestroy, whose successful rivalry with Raimund was one of the hardest blows the latter had to bear; there is no poetry, no sentiment, no depth in Nestroy's work, but it is extraordinarily brilliant and witty. In *Der böse Geist Lumpacivagabundus* (1833), his first and best known farce, and still more in plays that are less familiar outside Austria, like *Das Madl aus der Vorstadt* (1841) and *Einen Jux will er sich machen* (1842), Nestroy shows himself the equal of the best French farce-writers of the century; he stands alone in the German drama as a master of the wit of situation.

No history of the German drama in the first half of the nineteenth century can afford to ignore the music-drama or opera. For in Germany, as in the Italy of the seventeenth century, the opera was, and still is, a province of the national drama. The heritage of Gluck had passed, as we have seen, to Mozart, whose dramatic work was intimately associated with Austria; Mozart's last masterpiece, *Die Zauberflöte* (1791), was a national play, a Viennese "Posse," inspired by the Josephine ideals. *Fidelio*, the only opera by the next in the line of great German musicians, Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827), was produced in Vienna in 1805, and formed a link between Mozart and the Romantic music-dramatists. Of these the most important is Karl Maria von Weber (1786-

## CHAPTER XX.

## LITERATURE IN SWABIA AND AUSTRIA.

THE nationalism with which the nineteenth century opened was all in favour of the development of what might be called the spirit of place in German literature. Dialect literature was cultivated to a degree unknown before, and purely tribal and local ideas found an expression in poetry which would not have been tolerated in earlier centuries, or in periods which aimed at metropolitan concentration. The Low German races, which in the seventeenth century had futilely attempted to assert their literary individuality, now produced a novelist of such eminence as Fritz Reuter, while in the South we find a Swabian literature, an Austrian literature, and even the beginnings of a Swiss literature in German.

The Swabian movement of the nineteenth century offers the greatest possible contrast to the cosmopolitanism of the two greatest Swabians of the eighteenth, Wieland and Schiller; the new school was an offshoot of the Romantic movement. The Swabian poets, who looked up to Uhland as their leader, preserved faithfully the Romantic ideals, if not those of the first Romantic School, at least of the Heidelberg Romanticists; in Swabia, in fact, Romanticism seemed best protected against that disintegration and decay which rapidly overtook the movement elsewhere, after the fall of Napoleon had changed the political aspect of Germany. The mission of the Swabians, it might be said, was to keep alive the Romantic traditions during the barren age . . . "Young

*Meer* (1805), *Klein Roland* (1808), *König Karls Meerfahrt* (1812), *Taillefer* (1812), *Des Sängers Fluch* (1814), and *Graf Eberhard der Rauschebart* (1815); of his later years, *Das Glück von Edenhall* (1834). These, together with Uhland's wonderful imitations of the Volkslied, such as *Der gute Kamerad* (1809) and *Der Wirtin Töchterlein* (1809), belong to the masterpieces of German ballad and lyric poetry. Uhland was also ambitious of fame as a dramatist, but neither *Ernst, Herzog von Schwaben* (1818), nor *Ludwig der Bayer* (1819), full of genuine poetry as they are, is written with a knowledge of the needs and conditions of the theatre.

Of the lesser poets who revolved like satellites round Uhland, the most considerable is Justinus Kerner (1786-1862), who, like Uhland, had a profession apart from his literary interests. He was a doctor, and his hospitable home in the little Swabian town of Weinsberg was a centre of pilgrimage for the poets and literary enthusiasts of the time. His first book, *Reiseschatten, von dem Schauspieler Luchs* (1811), is in its mixture of poetry and prose, humour and seriousness, a kind of forerunner of the later "Reisebilder" of Heine and other "Young German" writers. His *Gedichte* first appeared collected in 1826. Less gifted than Uhland, Kerner had more of the irresponsible spontaneity of the older Romanticists; his songs, especially those in the manner of the Volkslied, are uninfluenced by that historical culture which gives classic polish to Uhland's; and his subjective poetry is tinged with a mysticism which was equally foreign to Uhland's lucid and sober mind. Like Brentano, with whom Kerner had many points in common, he gave himself up in later years to the study of the mystic borderland between the natural and the supernatural; his strange book, *Die Seherin von Prevorst* (1829), the study of a peculiar case of somnambulism, belongs, in its imaginative interpretation, rather to literature than to medical science.

Another member of Uhland's circle, Gustav Schwab (1792-1850), was a pastor, and devoted his leisure to an extensive and varied literary activity. He wrote a life

of Schiller, revived the memory of older writers such as Rollenhagen and Paul Fleming, translated Lamartine, and, best of all, edited the German *Volksbücher* (1836-37), a work that is still one of the treasures of the German household. Several of his songs have become popular, but on the whole his lyric is not inspired. Hermann Kurz (1813-73), a younger man than Schwab, also distinguished himself as a translator and interpreter of the older literature; his novels, *Schillers Heimatjahre* (1843) and *Der Sonnenwirt* (1854), are among the books of this time which are still read in Germany. Karl Mayer (1786-1870) and Gustav Pfizer (1807-90), two other members of the group, are, undeservedly, more forgotten to-day than Schwab; while Wilhelm Waiblinger (1804-30), the most genuinely Romantic and the most unhappy of them all, certainly deserves a better place in his countrymen's memory than that which he occupies. He belonged to the group, however, only by virtue of his birth; his work was in a different vein from theirs; he spent the best years of his short life in Italy and wrote enthusiastic lyrics in the cause of Greece (*Lieder der Griechen*, 1823). Wilhelm Hauff (1802-27), the novelist of the Swabian circle, was cut off in early manhood; but we owe to him one of the best German imitations of the *Waverley Novels*, *Lichtenstein* (1826), some excellent short stories, such as *Das Bild des Kaisers* (1828), and a fantastic sketch in the manner of Hoffmann, *Phantasien im Bremer Ratskeller* (1827).

The limitations of this Swabian group of poets may be inferred from the writers that have just been discussed—their parochialism and their somewhat narrow outlook; literature was to them the pastime of idle moments, rather than the main business of their lives. Only Uhland and Waiblinger allowed themselves to venture beyond the Swabian horizon, and to take an interest in the political and intellectual movements of the outside world. And yet this little circle did produce, and from the very midst of its limitations, a lyric poet of the first rank, Eduard Mörike (1804-75), pastor in the Swabian village of

Cleversulzbach, and subsequently lecturer on German literature in Stuttgart. A quiet, retiring man, who wrote little and hardly came into contact with the world of letters at all, Mörike is a better representative of the Swabian spirit than Uhland; for here we have the peculiarly Swabian form of Romanticism at its best. His *Gedichte*, which appeared collected in 1838, contain a number of poems, such as *Jung Volker* (1826), *Das verlassene Mädchen* (1829), *Agnes* (1831), *Schön-Rohtraut* (1837), *Soldatenbraut* (1837), and *Ein Stündlein wohl vor Tag* (1837), which are unsurpassed in the whole range of German lyric poetry. Mörike's charm lies in a perfect truth and simplicity combined with a reticence which implies more than it expresses, which spiritualises rather than lays bare the emotions of the soul. And so delicate and fragile is this art that it can hardly even be adapted to the robust type of ballad. The lyric quality is also prominent in Mörike's prose writings. One of these, and the most ambitious, is an unfinished novel, *Maler Nolten* (1832), which forms a landmark in the development of the Romantic novel from its original starting-point in *Wilhelm Meister*. Mörike, however, has but little of the talent that goes to the making of a good novelist; *Maler Nolten* is fragmentary and formless, and has as good as no plot or construction; its characters are neither conceived nor presented dramatically; but—and here lies the peculiar charm of the book—they are drawn with that delicacy of insight into the hidden workings of heart and mind which is so peculiarly characteristic of Mörike's lyric poetry.

In the German literature of the last two centuries every literary movement has been associated more or less closely with some line of philosophic thought; every school has had its philosopher. The Swabian thinker who provided the philosophical background for the present school was not, as might perhaps have been expected, the greatest of all Swabian philosophers, Hegel, whose influence was then in the ascendant, but F. Th. Vischer (1807-87), whose *Ästhetik* (1847-58) was one of the influential books of

its time. But Vischer was not merely a professor of philosophy, he was also a literary critic and a poet; his *Lyrische Gänge* (1882) contains verse of originality and vigour, and his humorous and satiric novel, *Auch Einer* (1879), is still popular.

While in Swabia the great Romantic traditions were kept alive by this group of poets until a period when these traditions had long ceased to be anything but a memory to the rest of Germany, a parallel movement of a similar character is to be observed in Austria. But Austria being geographically further removed from the Romantic focuses, her literature was less narrowly Romantic in its character. The Austrians were influenced by the Swabians, certainly by Uhland, but they were also to a greater extent influenced by the chief poetic force in Europe at the beginning of the century, Byron. In the foregoing chapter we have seen how they had built up for themselves a national drama out of elements drawn from eighteenth-century classicism and German and Spanish romanticism; a similar individuality and independence is to be traced in their lyric poetry. Earlier than in North Germany the Napoleonic conquest called forth a patriotic lyric in Austria, the best example of which is the *Wehrmannslieder* (1809) of the dramatist H. J. von Collin; and at a later date the tyranny of Metternich provoked a poetry of political revolt which preceded in time the political lyric of North Germany. Of this later movement the chief representative was Graf Anton Alexander von Auersperg (1806-76), who was known to literature as "Anastasius Grün." Grün's liberalism is most definitely expressed in the volume entitled *Spaziergänge eines Wiener Poeten* (1831), a frank, although in its satire somewhat guarded, challenge to the Austrian government. Political, too, are, more or less, the poems *Der letzte Ritter* (Maximilian I.) (1831), *Schutt* (1836), and *Nibelungen im Frack* (1850). Satire soon, however, grows old, and the modern reader is likely to give Grün a higher place as the purely lyric poet of *Blätter der Liebe* (1830).

Lyric poets of no mean order were also two of the dramatists of the period, Grillparzer and Zedlitz. The former's *Tristia ex Ponto* (1835), a cry of very real personal suffering from the dark days of his life between 1825 and 1835, has been already mentioned; and in his later years he gave vent to his dislikes and antipathies in epigrams and satire. The tyranny of the autocracy weighed heavily on Grillparzer; it ate into his soul and threw a shadow over all his life. Zedlitz, on the other hand, who showed distinctly higher powers as a lyric poet than as a dramatist, kept aloof from the political discontent of the time and sought refuge in the Romantic poetry of Italy or in the more modern phase of Romanticism represented by Byron, whom he translated and imitated. His famous *Totenkränze* (1827), threnodies at the graves of famous personalities in history and fiction—Wallenstein and Napoleon, Romeo and Juliet, Tasso and Byron—are among the best imitations of Byronic poetry in German literature, while some of his ballads, notably *Die nächtliche Heerschau* (1829), are worthy of the great German traditions.

But the master-singer of Austria, the greatest Austrian lyric poet since Walther von der Vogelweide, was the unhappy Lenau. Nikolaus Franz Niembsch von Strehlenau, to give him his full name, was born at Csatad in Hungary in 1802. He came into the world under an unhappy star, and his whole life was a continuous battle with untoward circumstances. He studied at the university of Vienna, and in 1831 came into touch with the Swabian circle of poets; with their encouragement and assistance he published in the following year his first volume of *Gedichte*. There is little, however, that is Swabian in his poetic talent; the conditions he grew up under were different, and his verse was influenced by other models than those which they admired. At times we hear an echo of Eichendorff, at times of Goethe; but of all the poets of his epoch the one that touched the deepest chord in Lenau's nature was Byron. Unlike Byron, however, Lenau had not the power of rising above

his misery, or defying it, like Heine, with contempt and cynicism; his pessimism is the pessimism of blank, unrelieved despair. This is the dominant note of his poetry, which compares with that of Eichendorff as his wind-swept Hungarian puestas in autumn with the leafy vaults of the summer forest of which Eichendorff sings so jubilantly. The political tyranny in Austria rested less heavily on Lenau than on others among his contemporaries, because his own personal life was more distraught; at the same time, it was with great hopes and expectations that he turned his back on the old world and greeted America as a new fatherland. For a brief space his melancholy was forgotten in the pristine world of the West; the veil of pessimism lifts in his American poems, such as *Der Indianerzug*, *Das Blockhaus*, *Niagara*. But it was only a brief respite; disenchantment dogged him even here, and he returned to Europe with his one great hope shattered. He settled for a time in Vienna, then near his Swabian friends in Württemberg, and when life was beginning to assume a more kindly aspect and its enigmas to press less insistently on him, he suddenly became insane. This was in 1844, and after some years in an asylum he died in 1850. Lenau's work comprises, besides the lyrics of his *Gedichte* (1832) and *Neuere Gedichte* (1838, 1840), an epic drama on the subject of *Faust* (1836), into which he poured his own scepticism and despair, and two epic poems, *Savonarola* (1837) and *Die Albigenser* (1842), which are hardly less unrelievedly pessimistic.

The lyric poets of the middle of the century who were associated with the political and revolutionary movement between 1840 and 1848, will be discussed in a subsequent chapter. There is, however, one writer who stood aloof from both the political and literary movement, and whose place is more obviously with the great Swabian and Austrian lyricists than with the political singers: Annette von Droste-Hülshoff (1797-1848), Germany's greatest poetess. A native of Westphalia and a strict Catholic, this unassuming, retiring writer had few



ties with her contemporaries; and her poetry bears the stamp of a strong, original personality. No doubt Byron influenced to some extent her longer narrative poems, such as *Das Hospiz auf dem grossen St Bernhard* (1838), and the magnificent epic of the Thirty Years' War, *Die Schlacht im Loener Bruch* (1838); there is a touch of the pessimistic *mal de siècle* in her work, but nothing of the sentimental Romantic sweetness common to most of her contemporaries; indeed, she is at times almost repellent in her ascetic strength. As a poet of nature, Annette von Droste-Hülshoff saw with unerring truth, a truth that is never blinded by human sentiments or emotions. Her Westphalian *Haidebilder* are as unforgettable as Lenau's; and in *Das geistliche Jahr*, which was not published until after her death (1851), she has written the finest German religious poetry of the nineteenth century.

## CHAPTER XXI.

## THE END OF ROMANTICISM.

LIKE all literary movements, Romanticism passed through the various stages of organic growth ; its tentative beginnings were followed by the soaring idealism of youth, and this in turn gave place to the definite and practical aims of maturity. It now remains for us to consider the disintegration and decay of the movement. From the very first there were elements of an abnormal and unhealthy character in German Romanticism, and the germs of decadence may be traced back to the very inception of Romantic ideas in the first Romantic School. The ultimate dissolution was brought about by the one-sided development of certain tendencies, by the increasing mediocrity of the literature itself, and, above all, by the change in the general thought of the nation, which became unfavourable and even antagonistic to Romanticism.

The decay of Romanticism set in most conspicuously in the centre where it was born, in Berlin. Here, as we have seen, Brentano and Arnim settled after they left Heidelberg, and, for a time, the literary circles of the capital, which were at least unanimous in their admiration of Goethe, afforded a favourable soil for the Romantic ideas. Eichendorff, who was associated with this Berlin phase of Romanticism, was a lyric poet of the first rank, and Chamisso's perfect sincerity lent strength to his genius. But mediocrity began to creep in with the work of the most popular novel-writer of the circle, Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué (1777-1843). In his many

novels on themes of chivalry and on subjects drawn from northern mythology and saga, Fouqué illustrates the danger to which Romantic fiction was peculiarly exposed, that of falling back into the manner of the "Ritterroman" of the later "Sturm und Drang." Deficient in the psychological insight of the more gifted Romanticists, Fouqué is satisfied to people his books with crudely drawn conventional figures, and he has recourse in his treatment of incident and motive only too readily to the supernatural. His novels, such as *Der Zauberring* (1813) and *Die Fahrten Thiodulfs des Isländers* (1815), which, no doubt, responded to a need of their time, are long forgotten. Fouqué only lives to-day by two shorter stories, *Undine* (1811), a charming fairy-tale of a water-sprite, who by virtue of her marriage with a mortal becomes endowed with a soul, but who is ultimately lured back to her native element; and the hardly less charming *Sintram und seine Gefährten* (1814). It is here that Fouqué's talent, not very strong at the best, is seen to most advantage.

But the master-novelist of this period of Romantic decay is without question Ernst Theodor Wilhelm—or Amadeus, as he called himself in honour of Mozart—Hoffmann. Born at Königsberg in 1776, Hoffmann was educated at the university of his native town with a view to a legal career; he held, between 1796 and 1800, official posts in Glogau, Berlin, and Posen. In the last mentioned town his satirical talents got him into difficulties, and he was virtually exiled to Plozk, a small town on the Vistula. Later we find him in Warsaw, where he remained until 1806, when the occupation of that city by the French deprived him of his post. He had a decided talent for music, which in those years had been the chief occupation of his leisure time, and now he resolved to make it his profession. He obtained the position of conductor of the theatre-orchestra in Bamberg. With a view of eking out his meagre income, he turned to literature, and with his first book, *Phantasiestücke in Callots Manier* (1814-15), to which Jean Paul Friedrich Richter

wrote the preface, he attracted more attention than he had ever done by his compositions. Callot, it should be added, was a French artist of the early seventeenth century, whose imagination had much in common with Hoffmann's. The grotesqueness of the *Phantasiestücke* is, however, of quite a different order from the more sentimental humour of Richter, by whom Hoffmann was naturally influenced; his style, too, is much more vivid and concise, and his outlook on life, although Romantic enough, is free from eighteenth-century pathos and sentiment. In 1814 Hoffmann was again in Berlin, where he obtained an official position in connection with the law courts. He was soon the heart and soul of the literary circles of the Prussian capital, and Fouqué and Chamisso were for a time his closest friends; but he lacked balance, and gradually slipped into a life of dissipation which brought his career to a premature end in 1822.

Hoffmann's stories fall into several well-defined groups. Best known are those in which the fantastic side of his imagination is allowed to run riot: gruesome tales which depend for their horrors on the supernatural. To this group belongs the novel, *Die Elixiere des Teufels* (1815-16), a powerful story of a Capuchin monk who tastes of a mysterious elixir preserved among the reliques of his monastery, with the consequence that he is driven from one crime and one horror to another, to end ultimately in contrition and repentance. We have obviously here the old tale of terror, as it was cultivated by Monk Lewis in England, and by Lewis's models, the successors of the "Sturm und Drang" in Germany; but it is told with a power of plastic presentment and a realism which none of the older German writers had at their command. To the same group of stories belong most of the *Nachtstücke* (1817), where mysterious "Doppelgänger" and still more gruesome automata which come to life, cause even more of a shudder than the *Teufels Elixiere*. This class of story, which was really only representative of one period of Hoffmann's work, culminates in the morbid

novel of *Klein Zaches, genannt Zinnober* (1819). Zaches is an "Alraune," that weird goblin of German folklore, which was dug up at the base of a gallows; and he upsets the moral order of the world by taking credit for the good that others do, while throwing on to other people's shoulders the responsibility of his own misdeeds. The story has more than its share of morbid horrors, but it is only fair to say that it does not depend for its sole or even main interest on the supernatural.

To Hoffmann's second period belong a number of admirable stories, in which the supernatural plays either no rôle at all, or at best a very subordinate one. These were introduced by *Das Majorat*, one of the *Nachtstücke*, and they make up the greater part of the volumes that are entitled *Die Serapionsbrüder* (1819-21). As the best stories of this group may be mentioned *Der Artushof*, *Meister Martin der Kufner und seine Gesellen*, and Hoffmann's masterpiece, *Das Fräulein von Scuderi*. In the last group of Hoffmann's work, of which the representative novel is the unfinished *Lebensansichten des Katers Murr nebst fragmentarischer Biographie des Kapellmeisters Johannes Kreisler in zufälligen Makulaturblättern* (1820-22), a reversion may be detected to Richter's peculiar form of humour, namely, a humour that is reflective, sentimental and, although not free from exaggeration, rarely grotesque. The hero of *Kater Murr*, which, no doubt, contains some of Hoffmann's maturest writing, is a cat, and the cat is assumed to write its life and opinions on the proofs of Kreisler's autobiography, the whole being printed and bound up together. Strong, vivid, and powerful as Hoffmann's work is—and Germany possessed no greater master of fiction in the first half of the nineteenth century—it belongs, none the less, to a period in which Romanticism had outlived itself; the delicate touches of the great Romantic art are still there, but the morbid exaggeration and extravagance with which the themes are treated is an unmistakable sign of decadence.

Although not in the same sense indicative of decay as Hoffmann's novels, the stories which one of the leaders of

the first Romantic School, Ludwig Tieck, wrote about the same time, bear testimony to the change that had come over Romantic ideas in the space of little more than twenty years. Tieck's many *Novellen*, written between 1821 and 1840, his excellent historical story, *Der Aufruhr in den Cevennen* (1826), and the interesting novel on the lines of *Wilhelm Meister*, *Der junge Tischlermeister* (1836), are in workmanship superior to his early books, but the old Romantic idealism appears a little incongruous in an age that had come through the political realities of the rise and fall of Napoleon.

The most promising form of Romantic fiction was undoubtedly the historical novel; and there seemed every prospect that Germany would at this time build up a national historical fiction on the basis which writers like Arnim had prepared. But this hope reckoned without the influence of Scott, who held all Europe under his spell; the German writers had no option but to abandon their old models and learn anew from the *Waverley Novels*. This was the case with the two chief authors of historical fiction at this time, Wilhelm Hauff, who has already been mentioned, and W. H. Häring (1798-1871), known to literature as "Willibald Alexis." The former belongs to this category by virtue of his *Lichtenstein* (1826), which, if anything, errs by excessive indebtedness to its models. Alexis deserves more careful attention, for, although deeply influenced by Scott, he did succeed in creating a distinctly original type of novel for Prussia. He began his career not merely as an imitator of Scott, but even passed off his first books as actual translations of Scott. He soon, however, outgrew this dependence, and in 1832 appeared his first important novel, *Cabanis*, a story of the time of Frederick the Great. Between 1840 and 1856 followed a series of six novels from national Prussian history (*Der Roland von Berlin*, 1840; *Der falsche Waldemar*, 1842; *Die Hosen des Herrn von Bredow*, 1846-48; *Ruhe ist die erste Bürgerpflicht*, 1852; *Isegrimm*, 1852, and *Dorothea*, 1856), on which his reputation as a master of the German historical novel rests. From Scott he has borrowed the

power of vivifying the historical details of a past age, but he did not, like Scott's other imitators, copy slavishly the technical details of his master. His originality is to be seen in his more modern, matter-of-fact method of presenting his story, although, unfortunately, there still clings to him that old failing of the German Romantic movement, the want of clear, plastic outlines. His books are consequently not as interesting to read as their subjects might lead us to expect. Apart from these two writers, the historical novel stood high in favour in Germany in the early nineteenth century. *Der Jude* (1827), by Karl Spindler (1796-1855), was one of the better novels of this class; and Heinrich Zschokke (1771-1848) endeavoured in his *Bilder aus der Schweiz* (1824-26) to do for Switzerland what Scott had done for Scotland in his *Waverley Novels*. Zschokke was a native of Magdeburg, but a Swiss by adoption. His earliest book, *Abällino, der grosse Bandit* (1794), was a popular example of the pre-Romantic robber-stories which owed their origin to Schiller's *Räuber*. He might be described as the first writer who put forward the Swiss point of view, and is thus the forerunner of Gotthelf and Keller. This peculiarly Swiss quality is, however, more evident in his pedagogic novel, *Das Goldmacherdorf* (1817), and in the devotional poems of his *Stunden der Andacht* (1809-16), than in his historical Swiss stories.

The Romantic spirit, chilled by the sober realism of the new epoch, sought refuge in the poetry of the East; it was Goethe, who here, with his *Westöstliche Divan*, pointed out the way. The master of German oriental poetry is Friedrich Rückert (1788-1866), who began with his *Geharnischte Sonette* (1814) as a patriotic poet of the War of Liberation. He soon, however, outgrew this mood, and under the influence of the Viennese orientalist, J. von Hammer-Purgstall, became an ardent student of oriental poetry. The poems of his *Östliche Rosen* (1822) were, like Goethe's *Divan*, inspired by Hafiz, and in the following year Rückert published a large number of translations of Eastern literature. Chief of these are the

*Makamen* of Hariri (1826-37), the merry adventures of an Arabian rogue, the Sanskrit *Nal und Damajanti* (1828), the Chinese *Schi-King* (1833), the Persian *Rostem und Sohrab* (1838), and a collection of the oldest Arabian Volkslieder, *Die Hamasa* (1846). His longest and most ambitious reproduction of oriental poetry is *Die Weisheit des Brahmanen* (6 volumes, 1836-39), a didactic poem, or rather collection of didactic, aphoristic verse. Apart from his oriental work, Rückert belongs with his *Liebesfrühling* (1834) and *Haus- und Jahreslieder* (1832-38) to the group of Romantic lyric poets which includes Eichendorff and Chamisso; his lyric vein is akin to theirs, but he is lacking in their concentration; his verse came too easily and is correspondingly diffuse. As he became more immersed in oriental studies, he showed a tendency to introduce exaggerated imagery and far-fetched metaphors into his German poetry. But Rückert remains with Platen one of the great verse artists in German poetry; his wealth of rhythmic form is inexhaustible. Romanticism in its decay is also to be seen in the work of E. K. F. Schulze (1789-1817), whose two epics *Cäcilie* and *Die bezauberte Rose* (both 1818) stand out as isolated productions in an age that cared but little for the allegorical epic. At times Schulze reminds us of Wieland, but he was too much of a Romanticist to have sympathy for the latter's lighter tone; and his brief life was wholly overshadowed by the death of a woman for whom he cherished an almost morbid passion.

A more significant transformation of the Romantic spirit is to be seen in the active sympathy of a number of the younger poets for the struggle for liberty then acute in Greece and Poland; for the second time in its history, we might say, Romanticism placed itself at the service of a great political ideal. Byron, of course, was here a leader and example. Among the champions of Greek independence in Germany the chief was Wilhelm Müller (1794-1827), a native of Dessau, whose *Lieder der Griechen* (1821-24) awoke a warm echo in German hearts. To the modern reader these songs seem monotonous;



their reiterated sentimental patriotism rings a little false; but no such criticism can be brought against Müller's unpolitical lyric. Here he appears as a poet in many ways akin to Chamisso; in his love poetry especially he has the same power of simple, direct utterance, perhaps also the same limited horizon. His *Müllerlieder*, a cycle of love songs, the most popular of all his verses, gives voice even more precisely than Chamisso's love poetry to the unsophisticated emotion of the German "Volk." In his *Wanderlieder*, again, there are points of similarity with Eichendorff; and his sea poetry—most original of all—no doubt influenced Heine's. His first collection of purely lyric poetry appeared in 1821 under the title *Gedichte aus den hinterlassenen Papieren eines reisenden Waldhornisten*, a second volume appearing in 1824; his sea poetry is to be found in the beautiful cycles, *Muscheln von der Insel Rügen* (1825) and *Lieder aus dem Meerbusen von Salerno* (1827). In estimating Müller's contributions to the storehouse of German lyric poetry it must not be forgotten that he was cut off at the early age of twenty-nine. The Byronic fever and the Byronic enthusiasm for suppressed nationalities are to be traced in most German poets of this epoch, in F. von Gaudy (1800-40), Chamisso's friend and the German translator of Béranger, and in Julius Mosen (1803-67), whose many novels and Romantic dramas, but rarely read now, mark the gradual tapering-off of the Romantic literature. Nor must it be forgotten that one of the greater German poets of this epoch, August von Platen, also wrote a series of noble *Polenlieder* (1830-33).

August, Graf von Platen-Hallermünde (1796-1835), a native of Ansbach, occupies a solitary position in the literature of the age. He, too, was a Romanticist, but a Romanticist who realised and felt keenly the degeneration of the Romantic movement; his poetry might be described as an effort, perhaps only vaguely conscious, to stay the decay of Romanticism. He began, like Rückert, with *Ghaselen* (1821), imitations of the orientalism of the *Westöstliche Divan*, and the materials for his last epic,

*Die Abbasiden* (1834), also came from the East. It was, moreover, a genuine Romantic impulse that led him to dramatise the popular fairy-tale in *Die gläserne Pantoffel* (1824). On the other hand, no one poured out more contemptuous scorn on the degenerate Romanticists of the day than did Platen in his *Die verhängnisvolle Gabel* (1826), and in *Der romantische Oedipus* (1829), in which Immermann came in for the main share of the blows. In these plays Platen reveals himself as a powerful satirist, although his satire was limited to literary matters. The regeneration of Romantic poetry he sought in Italy, which from 1826 on he made his home. He adapted to German needs the metres and rhythms of Romance literature, and attained a mastery of form and purity of classical expression which even Goethe in his most classic days did not surpass. In a higher degree than Goethe's antique measures, Platen's poetry lays itself open to the reproach of coldness; no German poet, indeed, so completely expunged the personal and subjective element from his poetry as Platen did. With all his coldness, however, he remains the supreme artist of form among German poets; his *Sonette aus Venedig* (1825) are the finest sonnets in the German tongue. Although born into an age of decadence, he has left his stamp upon the poetic language of the Germans as no other; he vindicated for the last time the high ideals of the first Romantic School.

The last of the Romanticists was Karl Leberecht Immermann, who was born at Magdeburg in 1796 and died in 1840—the last, not chronologically, but by his qualities as a writer; he stands, it might be said, on the borderland between Romanticism and the movement that succeeded it. He experimented in every form of Romantic poetry; he wrote dramas in the style of Arnim, of Tieck, and of the “Schicksalsdramatiker.” His *Trauerspiel in Tirol* (1828) is an imposing tragedy, with Andreas Hofer as hero; his *Alexis* (1832), a trilogy based on the history of Peter the Great; while in *Merlin* (1832) he created, if not a drama for the stage, a dramatic poem of singular beauty, an essentially Romantic variant of the classical

Faust theme. Merlin in this modern mystery is a kind of Antichrist, in whom Immermann has embodied the distraughtness of his own age, the conflict of the Romantic soul between renunciation and happiness. Immermann has left a deeper mark on his time as a novelist than as a dramatist. As the author of the romance *Die Epigonen* (1836), he has thrown off his exclusive allegiance to Romanticism and stands out as the pioneer of that new fiction which was to dominate German literature throughout the last third of the century. Nowhere, indeed, is to be seen more clearly than in this novel the transition from the Romantic novel, inspired by *Wilhelm Meister*, to the new fiction of social problems. Without any very clearly planned plot, *Die Epigonen* is a veiled biography of the author himself; for he, too, felt bitterly that he was only an "Epigone," "late-born" in an age that was rapidly passing away. Immermann's second romance, *Münchhausen, eine Geschichte in Arabesken*, appeared in 1838-39, and in form is a relapse into the Romantic, or more specifically, Richterian confusion. It might be described as a receptacle for Immermann's own likes and dislikes, his frank opinions of his time; but he had neither the imagination nor the humour which, as so often in Jean Paul's case, make up for the confused formlessness of the whole. In *Münchhausen*, however, there lies embedded a short story of German peasant life, *Der Oberhof*, which is a masterpiece of its kind. Here, again, Immermann, "Epigone" although he was, was building for the future; his *Oberhof* is the first modern peasant-story in European literature, and the forerunner of a vast literature of the peasant, in which the German writers of the next generation were peculiarly to excel. Immermann's last work of importance was a modernisation of *Tristan und Isolde* (published 1841), which he did not live to finish. As director of the theatre in Düsseldorf, where he had settled as Landgerichtsrat in 1827, he contributed in no small degree to the artistic and literary development of the German theatre.

## CHAPTER XXII.

## YOUNG GERMANY AND THE POLITICAL LYRIC.

THE group of writers known as "Young Germany" represents the complete antithesis to the Romantic movement. That ideal, unworldly spirit which, in spite of patriotic zeal and national aims, clung to the Romantic poets to the last, here gives place to a practical materialism; the individualism and the lyricism of Romanticism are discarded for social philosophies and politics; and these find their natural literary outlet in the newspaper-*feuilleton* and the social novel. The change had been due partly to the broadly collective tendencies in Hegel's philosophy, partly to the less healthy influence of Saint-Simon; partly, too, to the disappointment of the German people in their hopes of becoming, as a consequence of the national rising against Napoleon, a great free nation. The political fiasco of the first half of the century destroyed all faith in the wider issues of Romanticism, and the new generation felt that nothing was to be achieved by that form of nationalism which found its expression in the Romantic literature. The new watchword was cosmopolitanism, and the ideal of the "Young German" was to approximate as much as possible his mode of thinking and writing to that of the French.

That France was the saviour of Europe was first realised by the disheartened German patriots at the Revolution of 1830, and the literary group of "Jungdeutschland" may be said to have taken its origin from that event. Phrases like "Young Germany" were in the air

at the time; and in the dedication of a volume of advanced literary criticism, *Ästhetische Feldzüge*, published in 1834, Ludolf Wienbarg (1802-72), a "privatdocent" in the university of Kiel, wrote: "Dir, junges Deutschland, nicht dem alten, widme ich diese Reden." In the following year a review was projected, which was to have borne this title. Before, however, the first number appeared, the German Bundestag issued a decree, dated December 10, 1835, which ordered the suppression of the literary school "known under the name of Young Germany," and mentioned expressly the names of Heinrich Heine, Karl Gutzkow, Ludolf Wienbarg, Theodor Mundt, and Heinrich Laube.

Of these men the first, Heine, was the oldest, and exemplifies most clearly the transition from Romanticism to "Young Germany," for Heine learned his art in the school of Romanticism, and, in spite of all later political enthusiasms and French veneer, he remained at heart a Romantic poet to the last. Heinrich, or rather Harry, Heine was born at Düsseldorf, of Jewish parentage, on December 13, 1797. Originally intended for a commercial career, he turned, with the support of his uncle, a wealthy Hamburg banker, to the study of law, and spent several years at the universities of Bonn, Göttingen, and Berlin. In Berlin he was taken up by the literary coteries and published his first volume of *Gedichte* (1822), as well as two dramas, *Almansor* and *William Ratcliff* (1823). It was not, however, until the *Harzreise* appeared in 1826, the description of a "sentimental" tour made in the Harz Mountains in 1824, that general attention was attracted to him. This book formed, together with two cycles of poems, *Die Heimkehr* and *Die Nordsee*, the first volume of the *Reisebilder*. In 1827 appeared his *Buch der Lieder*, which caused an enormous stir and made Heine at once the most popular poet of Germany. The novelty of the book was due to the fact that it combines with an unsurpassed felicity of lyric expression a boldness of imagery which was foreign to the Romantic lyric poets of the earlier period, and occasionally a biting irony.

This irony with which Heine regarded himself, his scathing gibes at his own emotions were, in themselves, a negation of the intense sincerity of the Romantic lyric; the spirit of self-criticism, for such it is when reduced to its ultimate elements, was quite in harmony with the anti-romantic tendencies of European letters in the epoch between the Revolutions of 1830 and 1848. It perhaps also explains why Heine's claims to greatness should have been more readily conceded by other nations than by his own. Germany, being closely identified with the spirit of Romanticism, was correspondingly less accessible to the new materialism, and resented Heine's irony and apparent insincerity as a wanton offence against her great poetic traditions. But the *Buch der Lieder* stands out, notwithstanding, as, with the possible exception of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, the most widely influential collection of lyric poetry of the nineteenth century. Heine made the German lyric cosmopolitan, just as Byron, a few decades earlier, had made English poetry the common possession of Europe.

In the same year as the *Buch der Lieder* Heine published the second part of his *Reisebilder*, which contained, besides a continuation of *Die Nordsee*, *Das Buch Le Grand*; a third volume (*Reise von München nach Genua, Die Bäder von Lucca*) appeared in 1830, a fourth (*Die Stadt Lucca, Englische Fragmente*) in 1831. In his *Nordsee* lyrics Heine struck perhaps the freshest note of all, for he is the only German poet who has felt to the full the magic and the mystery of the sea. In 1831 Heine made Paris his home, where he supported himself as correspondent for German newspapers, and worked in the interests of the Young German party with which the government decree had associated him. His warm sympathy for France also commended him to the French government, which, from 1836 to 1848, provided him with a pension. In the winter of 1834-35 Heine made the acquaintance of Eugénie Mirat, a French shop-girl who, years later, became his wife; kind and good-natured, Mathilde, as he called her, was entirely without understanding for her

husband's genius, and dragged him down rather than helped him. His prose writings in these years, apart from journalistic *feuilletons* on French affairs (*Französische Zustände*, 1833; *Der Salon*, 1834-40; *Lutesia*, 1854), were not of a kind to win him friends in Germany; *Die romantische Schule* (1836) is disfigured by tasteless personalities, *Ludwig Börne* (1840) is an attack on one who in life had been his friend. The biting satire of *Deutschland, ein Wintermärchen* (1844) was even less to German taste. But there is something of the magic of the old Romantic spirit in *Atta Troll, ein Sommernachtstraum* (1847, but written in 1841), which Heine himself called the "swan-song of the Romantik"; nowhere, indeed, is Heine's genius seen to better advantage than in this, the most original poem of the whole age. One forgets, amid the Romantic surroundings of the story of the Pyrenean dancing bear which, escaping from its keeper, finds refuge in the romantic vale of Roncevaux, that the poem is merely an allegorical veil covering a satire on the political poetry of the day.

In 1848 Heine was struck down by a terrible disease of the spine, which condemned him to a "mattress-grave" for the last eight years of his life, and in these years he rose, as a lyric poet, to heights he had never reached before. The spirit of the romances and lyrics which make up the collection of the *Romanzero* (1851), is nobler and more sincere than the sentimentality and irony of the *Buch der Lieder*. The strange fantastic love for the poetess, Camilla Selden, who nursed him in his last years, completed the transformation of Heine from a brilliant poet of genius to one of the greatest of lyric singers. The poetry of his closing years differs from that of the *Junge Leiden*, as the conventional roses and violets of that early poetry differ from the large white passion-flower which he pictured as overshadowing his own marble sarcophagus. Heine died in Paris on February 17, 1856.

Heine's comrade in arms in his battle for "Young German" Liberalism was Ludwig Börne, or to give him

his real name, Löb Baruch. He was considerably older than Heine, having been born in the Frankfort ghetto in 1786, and he died in Paris in 1837. Börne was not expressly mentioned in the decree of the Bundestag suppressing "Young Germany," but his influence on the movement was greater than Heine's. Both Heine and Börne suffered under the brutal persecution to which their race was subjected, both turned their backs on Germany, and found in Paris the new Jerusalem, a home of spiritual freedom and progress; and yet neither was able to wipe out entirely from his heart a strong sentiment of affection for his hand-and-tongue-tied German compatriots. Their peculiar talents were the complement of each other. Börne, essentially a practical man, saw political reform from its practical side, while Heine indulged in visionary panegyrics of freedom. Börne became the greatest journalist of the "Young German" epoch, Heine its greatest lyric poet. Like Heine, Börne had made his reputation in Germany before the Revolution of 1830, an event which both writers hailed as the beginning of a new era. As the editor of various periodicals, the chief of them being *Die Wage* (1818-20), Börne had, more perhaps than any other journalist in this age, influenced and moulded public opinion; and had the authorities not kept a watchful eye on him, he would doubtless have succeeded in kindling in his countrymen that spirit of revolt which was to lie dormant until 1848.

In 1830, weary of the fruitless struggle against the press-censorship, Börne found his way to Paris, from which he wrote the originally private *Briefe aus Paris*. They were published in the years 1830 and 1833, and as a natural result of their suppression by the government, were read with avidity throughout Germany. Börne here attempted to show Germany herself in the mirror of French events, to teach her the part she ought to play in the glorious war which France was waging for the freedom of humanity. Although more a document of the time than an abiding contribution to German prose literature, these letters mark an epoch in the history of the German



newspaper; they reformed German prose, and taught German journalists a brilliant, witty, and incisive prose style. Apart from such work, Börne's contributions to German literature are of small account. His literary criticism was limited by his political outlook and rarely inspired by purely æsthetic considerations. The democrat in him, for instance, sympathised with the "bürgerliche" humour and sentiment of Jean Paul; and rose in rebellion against Goethe's aristocratic nature. His own short stories, such as *Der Narr im weissen Schwan* and *Der Esskünstler* (1822), are unimportant and represent merely another side of his journalistic activity.

In the earlier part of their work Börne and Heine were virtually predecessors of the "Young German" movement. The actual leader of the school in its narrower limits was Karl Gutzkow (1811-78). As a man of letters Gutzkow was the immediate product of the July Revolution, for it was in the year 1830 that his thoughts first turned to a literary career. An ironical romance, *Maha-Guru, Geschichte eines Gottes*, appeared in 1833 and attracted some attention, and *Wally die Zweiflerin* (1835) first made his reputation. This appears a colourless enough novel to us now, but in its day its religious scepticism and outspoken tone caused great offence, and cost its author three months' imprisonment. *Wally die Zweiflerin* is the "Young German" interpretation of the theme that Friedrich Schlegel had treated in his *Lucinde*, and it exerted a decisive influence on the fiction of the time. Gutzkow's best work, both as a novelist and a dramatist, belongs to a later period. His longer novels, of which *Blasedow und seine Söhne* (1838-39), *Die Ritter vom Geiste* (1850-52), and *Der Zauberer von Rom* (1858-61) are the most important, are unwieldy and formless, and one and all "Tendenzromane" or "novels with a purpose." But *Die Ritter vom Geiste* is, to a certain extent, the starting-point for the modern German social novel: it is an attempt not merely to tell a story, but also to reproduce an entire epoch, the reactionary epoch that set in after the failure of the Revolution of 1848. The actual story,

however, recalls too frequently the old "family novels" of the eighteenth century to be attractive to modern readers. As a dramatist Gutzkow has enjoyed longer favour; for his best plays are still occasionally to be seen in German theatres. *Zopf und Schwert* (1843) is an effective historical comedy of the court of Friedrich Wilhelm I. of Prussia, which shows the influence of Scribe and of the French intrigue comedy of the time. In 1847 he produced two plays, also historical, but in different ways; *Das Urbild des Tartüffe*, a comedy founded on an incident in Molière's life, and *Uriel Acosta*, a blank-verse tragedy, the hero of which is Spinoza's master and predecessor. The popularity of the latter play was, however, less due to its poetic qualities than to its bearing on the question of the moment; it is an echo of the conflict that raged round D. F. Strauss's *Leben Jesu*, a kind of *Nathan der Weise* of the nineteenth century. Gutzkow's last important play, *Der Königsleutnant* (1849), is a dramatisation, with no very conscientious adherence to facts, of an episode in Goethe's boyhood described in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, and was written for the Goethe centenary in 1849.

Heinrich Laube (1806-84), a native of Silesia, was another of the leaders of "Young Germany," but his literary work had even less vitality than Gutzkow's. He contributed to the movement volumes of essays and criticism, a series of lengthy novels under the collective title *Das junge Europa* (1833-37), in which the ideas of the time are enunciated and advocated with the warmth of a special pleader; unfortunately the form, or rather formlessness of the novels, makes them unreadable to-day except as documents of their time. There is even less vitality in the six volumes of *Reisenovellen*, which he published between 1834 and 1837 in imitation of Heine. His chief work of fiction, *Der deutsche Krieg* (1863-66), is a historical novel in nine volumes, dealing with the epoch of the Thirty Years' War, and in a realistic manner that contrasts sharply with the imaginative standpoint of the Romantic writers. As a dramatist Laube was an avowed enthusiast for the French

stage ; he translated and adapted the best French plays of the day, and all his own dramatic work has the stamp of clever French workmanship. Like Gutzkow, he attained his chief success with a comedy on a literary subject, *Die Karlsschüler* (1847), of which the young Schiller is the rather impossible hero. Like Gutzkow, too, he wrote historical tragedies in blank verse, of which the most important is *Graf Essex* (1856). In one respect Laube has left a deep mark on his time ; he was the greatest German theatre-director of the century. For twenty-five years, from 1850 onwards, he controlled the fortunes of the German stage, first as director of the Hofburgtheater in Vienna, then of the Municipal theatres in Leipzig, and again in Vienna, of the Stadttheater there. The record of his work in this field, which is to be found in three volumes, *Das Burgtheater* (1868), *Das norddeutsche Theater* (1872), and *Das Wiener Stadttheater* (1875), is the part of his writings which has retained its value and interest longest.

A characteristic member of the "Young German" movement was Theodor Mundt (1808-61), whose *Madonna, Unterhaltungen mit einer Heiligen* created hardly less stir in 1835 than did *Wally die Zweiflerin* ; for here, too, the craving for emancipation from traditional religious orthodoxy and the moral conventions of the day found vent. The model for Mundt's "Madonna" was a certain Charlotte Stieglitz, who, in 1834, put an end to her life in the hopes that a great sorrow would awaken the poetic genius of her husband, Heinrich Stieglitz (1801-49). But it must be confessed that that poet's *Bilder des Orients* (1831-33) hardly justify his wife's tragic self-sacrifice. More interesting than Mundt is Bettina von Arnim (1785-1859), who has already been mentioned in an earlier chapter. She formed, one might say, a link between the "Young German" movement and the Romantic period. She had sat in devout adoration at Goethe's feet, and poured out her soul in the half-fictitious *Goethes Briefwechsel mit einem Kinde* (1834), a book that has not unjustly been called one of the most

beautiful of the whole Romantic movement. She wrote also the life of Karoline von Günderode (*Die Günderode*, 1840), the unhappy friend of Wilhelm von Humboldt, who killed herself in 1806. But the meeting of the waters of Romanticism and the new spirit is perhaps seen best of all in Bettina von Arnim's last book, which bears the fantastic title, *Dies Buch gehört dem König* (1849); here she lays at the feet of the romantically minded King of Prussia a description of the sufferings of the industrial classes under the new social conditions, a book of liberal political ideas set forth with Romantic fervour.

Just as the Heidelberg Romanticists brought the visionary dreams of the earlier Romantic School to a more definite focus, so now the movement associated with "Young Germany" advanced from theories to practical and concrete ends. The "Young German" enthusiasm for the Revolution of 1830 was followed by the political lyric which enjoyed a great vogue in Germany from 1840 to the Revolution of 1848. This lyric, like all political poetry, had, however, only a very transient interest, and it seems even less sincere to us to-day than that which was inspired by the War of Liberation a generation earlier. In its beginnings the new poetry was not restricted to revolutionary propaganda, but was also inspired by a growing distrust of the enemy beyond the Rhine, who under the "Young German" régime had enjoyed a high degree of favour. The movement began with a group of Rhine songs, *Der deutsche Rhein* by Nikolaus Becker (1809-45), with its famous refrain, "Sie sollen ihn nicht haben, den freien deutschen Rhein"; the still more famous *Wacht am Rhein* by Max Schneckenburg (1819-49), and a *Rheinlied* by Robert Prutz (1816-72), which brings out clearly the relation of the political movement to the radicalism of the "Young German" era. All three songs date from the year 1840. Of the three poets only Prutz has any further claim on our attention. He wrote ballads and historical tragedies, as well as political poetry, and he narrowly escaped summary punishment for a satirical comedy, *Die politische Wochenstube* (1843). In later life Prutz pro-

duced a few lyrics that have been remembered, but, once he had enlisted his talent in the service of politics, it was difficult for him to regain his freedom; and this was true not only of Prutz, but of most of his fellow-singers as well.

The revolutionary lyric broke out in earnest in the following year, 1841. Towards the end of that year Ferdinand Freiligrath in a poem, *Aus Spanien*, made an appeal to his brother poets to stand "auf einer höheren Warte als auf den Zinnen der Partei." This called forth a passionate retort from a young Swabian, Georg Herwegh, that party spirit was the mother of all enthusiasms and all victories; why should the poet hold himself aloof from it? For the first time the unworldly idealism of the Romantic lyric was challenged, and before long the young revolutionaries of 1841 had carried with them some of the last outposts of Romanticism, and even Freiligrath himself.

Herwegh and Freiligrath were the most eminent poets of this group. The former of these was born in Stuttgart in 1817, and passed a somewhat stormy youth, which culminated in an insult to an officer, as a consequence of which he had to flee to Switzerland. Here he published his *Gedichte eines Lebendigen* in 1841, a second collection following in 1844. Herwegh's verse recalls in its youthful exuberance the lyric of 1813, but it also falls frequently into the bombastic tone that disfigured much of the latter. He has, however, written not a few verses which justify the belief that he might have produced poetry of a higher kind, had he once been able to outgrow his revolutionary fever. On the strength of his *Gedichte eines Lebendigen* Herwegh became a celebrity; he returned to Germany, and was granted an interview by the Prussian king in which the latter expressed the hope that, if they must be enemies, they would at least be honourable ones. But this it was not in Herwegh's nature to be; he took advantage of the occasion to make political propaganda, and when the authorities intervened, he wrote a letter to the king in a tone which led to his immediate expulsion. The rôle of exiled political martyr was not, however, dis-

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tasteful to Herwegh, and when the Revolution of 1848 broke out, he placed himself at the head of a band of French and German revolutionaries who invaded Baden with the intention of converting that state into a republic. This was the end of Herwegh's career as a politician and also as a poet. His death did not take place until 1874.

Ferdinand Freiligrath was a much more staid and productive writer than Herwegh. • He was born at Detmold in 1810 and died at Cannstadt in 1876. His early poetry was permeated by Romanticism, less, however, by the old German Romanticism than by that blend of Byron and Victor Hugo which was to the taste of the younger generation; the brilliant exotic colouring of the East had a special attraction for his imagination in these early days. But soon after Herwegh sounded his call to arms, Freiligrath abandoned Romanticism as mere trifling, and became a political poet. In *Ein Glaubensbekenntnis* (1844) he declared himself openly a friend of revolution and reform, with the consequences that, to escape prosecution, he was obliged to flee, first to Belgium and then to Switzerland, ultimately to make a more or less permanent home for himself in London. In 1846 appeared another volume of revolutionary poetry under the provocative title *Ça ira*; and in 1848 *Die Toten und die Lebendigen* brought upon his head a trial for *lèse-majesté*, which, however, ended in his acquittal. Lastly, in 1849 and 1850, he published his *Neuere politische und soziale Gedichte*, which mark, on the whole, the high-water mark of the revolutionary lyric. In spite of these ten years of immersion in political strife, Freiligrath remained at heart a staunch friend of Romanticism, and, like other poets of that time, he returned to his old love in the more peaceful days that followed. Powerful as the best of his political poetry is, one cannot help feeling nowadays that he is a greater poet when he follows in the footsteps of the classic and romantic masters, or when he translates Byron, Burns, or Hugo; at least this is the poetry by which he now lives.

The other poets of this group, as far at least as they wrote political poetry, are now forgotten. Franz Dingelstedt (1814-81), for example, was the author of provocative *Lieder eines kosmopolitischen Nachtwächters* (1842), but he was only too glad to forget this youthful indiscretion when, in later years, he became an able and successful director of the Court Theatre in Stuttgart, then in Munich and in Weimar, where he was responsible for a memorable cycle of Shakespeare's histories produced on the occasion of the Shakespeare Tercentenary in 1864; ultimately he became director of the Vienna Hofburgtheater. In this practical activity lay his strength, not in his lyric, his dramas, or his novels. A. H. Hoffmann von Fallersleben (1798-1874) was also only a political poet by the way. A distinguished German philologist, he was obliged to resign his professorship at Breslau as a consequence of the publication in 1840 and 1841 of two volumes of *Unpolitische Lieder*. From 1843 on he lived a wandering, unsettled life, which brought him into touch with all classes of the German people. His lyrics, without breaking fresh ground as, for instance, Freiligrath's so often do, approximate more closely to the Volkslied; at the same time his purely political verses are rarely so arid of genuine lyric feeling as most of the political lyric of the time. Hoffmann's poetry may not soar very high, but it is always poetry; and songs like *Deutschland, Deutschland über alles* have still a warm place in the nation's heart.

Austria had, as we have seen, been more mercilessly ground under the heel of bureaucratic tyranny in the earlier half of the nineteenth century than North Germany; it is consequently not surprising that here, too, the political lyric of the forties should have found an echo. But by this time the character of Austrian political poetry had become resigned, and the Austrian poets who did contribute to the political lyric, such as Karl Beck (1817-79), Moritz Hartmann (1821-72), and A. Meissner (1822-85), leave the impression that the revolutionary ideas no longer stood in the foreground of their interests. If these men are remembered at all to-day, it is for other than



## CHAPTER XXIII.

## MIDCENTURY FICTION.

AFTER the storms of the revolutionary epoch, which, as we have just seen, were reflected in the political lyric of the time, German literature entered upon a calmer and more even period of its history. The third quarter of the century was not deficient in germinative ideas and important works, but it was, as far as literature was concerned, a period of intellectual indifference; the movement of the time was not favourable to poetry. The philosophy of G. W. F. Hegel (1770-1831) had dominated the era of Romantic decay, and especially that which followed the Revolution of 1830. Hegel's first notable work, *Die Phänomenologie des Geistes*, appeared in 1807; his *Logik* between 1812 and 1816, and his *Philosophie des Rechts* in 1820. Hegel set out from a Romantic basis, but his collectivism and his extraordinarily synthetic mind were hostile to that unfettered individualism which was the life-blood of Romanticism. It is strange that this great thinker, who opened up to the nineteenth century a new world of thought, should have exerted so barren, and even blighting, an influence on literature. As time went on, his philosophy gave place to the more radical, if less constructive, thinking of the so-called "Young Hegelians," like Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-72), author of *Das Wesen des Christentums* (1841), and David Friedrich Strauss (1818-74), whose *Das Leben Jesu* made so great a stir in the world in 1835; and this in turn was ousted by the pessimism of Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860).

Schopenhauer's chief work, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, appeared as early as 1819, but only became a force of magnitude in German intellectual life after the middle of the century. His philosophy, negative as it was, afforded the basis for a revival of poetry, on something akin to the earlier Romantic basis, in the sixties and seventies. Schopenhauer has another and more special claim to a place in the history of literature by virtue of his style, which is to be seen at its best in the essays of the collection, *Parerga und Paralipomena* (1851); he is one of the most eminent German prose writers of the first half of the nineteenth century. The supremacy of literature in these decades was threatened from another side, namely, by the rise of an absorbing interest in science, which, thanks to new discoveries, new theories of matter and force, and, above all, of biological evolution, was making an appeal to the popular imagination, as it had never made before. It is consequently hardly surprising that, amidst so many conflicting interests, poetry should have been relegated to a subordinate place; it also explains why the literature which attracted chief attention in these years, was a "Tendenzliteratur," a literature with a purpose.

As in the classical period the drama, in the Romantic the lyric, so now, when classicism and Romanticism had alike receded into the past, it was the novel which held the first place in popular favour. The stamp of this age is to be sought in its fiction. The midcentury novel may be said to have arisen directly out of the social and political tendencies of the time; but it was also deeply influenced by contemporary masters in French and English literature, such as Balzac and Dickens. Rarely, as in the case of Keller's *Der grüne Heinrich* or Storm's "Novellen," do we find books which are predominantly inspired by the traditions of Romanticism; even the historical novel preferred, to its disadvantage, to follow the methods laid down by an exacting science of history rather than to go back to the more spacious imaginative art of Scott and his earlier German imitators.

The interest in the "Volk," which the later Romanticists had cultivated and of which the "Young German" realists had at least not disapproved, now brought in a rich harvest. Immermann's *Oberhof* was the starting-point; and the first important representative of the peasant-novel was Albert Bitzius, better known by his literary pseudonym of "Jeremias Gotthelf" (1797-1854). This Swiss pastor's stories, of which the best are *Wie Uli der Knecht glücklich ward* (1841), *Uli der Pächter* (1846), and *Elsi, die seltsame Magd* (1850), are not free from a moralising purpose, which recalls the social novels of the eighteenth century; but so whole-hearted and sincere is his realism that, if we have to seek an old-world analogy for his art, we look rather to the bucolic, Homeric simplicity of Voss. Less true to nature are the famous *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* (1843-57) by Berthold Auerbach (1812-82); for Auerbach was less able to sustain the tone of *naïveté*, less able to keep himself free from the literary and social tendencies of his time; the *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* were the products of a very definite epoch, the ideas of which were soon to pass away. None the less, these stories were, in their time, a welcome relief from the novels with a purpose of the "Young German" school, and they were the forerunners of a literature of the peasant that has steadily increased down to our own time. Auerbach's longer novels, such as *Auf der Höhe* (1865), *Das Landhaus am Rhein* (1869), and *Waldfried* (1874) were less successful; for here his philosophic and sociological ideas, which show how closely he was bound up with the "Young German" period, had freer play; moreover, he was deficient in constructive talent.

The note of artistic sincerity which is lacking in Auerbach and his imitators is to be found in the idylls and stories (*Studien*, 1844-50) of Adalbert Stifter (1805-68), the prose poet of the Bohemian Forest, and in the works of the North German novelist, Fritz Reuter (1810-74), who, of all the writers of this time, is most akin in his art and methods to Dickens. But Reuter is more of a realist than Dickens, and the scope of his art more

limited. He restricts himself in his best work to his own province of Mecklenburg, and writes in Mecklenburg "Plattdeutsch," but he gives us a picture of the life of that province in its totality. Like Dickens, he occasionally yields to the temptations of sentimental writing, but he never caricatures. In his three greatest novels, *Ut de Franzosentid* (1860), *Ut mine Festungstid* (1863), and *Ut mine Stromtid* (1862-64), he has drawn largely on the experiences of his own unhappy life, which, on a mere suspicion of political disaffection, the Prussian government ruined by seven years' imprisonment in a fortress. Only in the *Stromtid*, the story of his later life as "Strom" or agriculturist in Mecklenburg, do we find a more restful outlook upon life. With these books Reuter achieved what the satirists of the seventeenth century attempted without success; he made "Plattdeutsch" a literary language; and it is largely due to him that this alone of the German dialects has effectively resisted the levelling influence of literary High German. What Reuter did for "Plattdeutsch" prose, Klaus Groth (1819-99), the author of *Quickborn* (1852), a collection of simple lyrics written in the Ditmarsch dialect, did for the language as a vehicle of lyric expression.

The novel of ideas at the middle of the nineteenth century was pre-eminently the social novel; the tentative and experimental beginnings of Laube and Gutzkow are here developed. The master of this form of fiction was Gustav Freytag (1816-95), a native of Upper Silesia. He made his reputation first, however, as a dramatist. After attaining a certain ephemeral success with plays such as *Die Valentine* (1847) and *Graf Waldemar* (1848), he produced in *Die Journalisten* (1852) what may be regarded as the best comedy of modern life of its time, a play which has still a place on the repertory of most German theatres. But excellent as *Die Journalisten* is—and its strength lies rather in its brilliant and witty dialogue than in any merit or novelty of form or theme—it rather brings to a greater perfection the comedy of the previous generation than inaugurates a new stage in the

development of the German drama. In *Die Journalisten*, in other words, Freytag nationalised the French comedy of the era of Scribe. In 1855 appeared his *Soll und Haben*, the best novel of its epoch. This is a story on the model of the English novel, dealing with modern German commercial life. In seeking the German people, "where it is to be found most efficient, at its work," Freytag put the literary stamp on the new democratic ideals which had come into power with the Revolution of 1848. His broad outlook on the rising German democracy, his constant assertion of the worth and dignity of commercialism beside the prestige of noble birth, and the kindly optimism with which he brings the hero of this story of industry and application to the headship of a great Hamburg commercial house, make Freytag's *Soll und Haben* one of the representative books of its time. His next novel, *Die verlorene Handschrift* (1864), was an attempt to do for the German professor what he had already done for the German merchant. But the kind of conflict which Freytag introduced here—on the quest of a lost manuscript of Tacitus the professor neglects his young wife and exposes her to the wiles of a princely lover—lay somewhat outside Freytag's sphere, and demanded a finer poetic insight than he had at his command. The consequence is that the novel degenerates often into triviality, and the possibilities of the theme are not fully taken advantage of.

In later life Freytag devoted himself to historical studies. Under masters like Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886) and his disciples, G. Waitz (1813-86), W. Giesebrecht (1814-89), and Heinrich von Sybel (1817-95)—to whose work must be added the magnificent basis for the study of the national past provided by the *Monumenta Germaniæ historica*, which Stein had founded in 1819—history was becoming an element of growing importance in German culture. But the historians did not limit themselves to German history; as early as 1854-56 Theodor Mommsen (1817-1904) had given the world that *Römische Geschichte* which laid an indispensable basis for the study of ancient

Rome; and in 1860 Jakob Burckhardt (1818-97) investigated the spiritual forces of the Renaissance in his fundamental *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien*. Between 1859 and 1862 Freytag published his *Bilder aus der deutschen Vergangenheit*, a series of vivid pictures of the great epochs of German history; and on the basis of these studies he planned a great prose epic, *Die Ahnen*, in the form of a succession of historical romances illustrating German national life from the fourth to the middle of the nineteenth century. The series opened well in 1872 with *Ingo* and *Ingraban*, which were followed by *Das Nest der Zaunkönige* (eleventh century, 1874), *Die Brüder vom deutschen Haus* (thirteenth century, 1875), *Marcus König* (sixteenth century, 1876), and gradually tapered away in *Die Geschwister*, two stories of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries (1878), and *Aus einer kleinen Stadt* (1880), which culminates with the Revolution of 1848. Freytag did not complete his task with the same freshness and zeal with which he had begun it; and indeed none of the novels touches the heights of *Soll und Haben* or *Die verlorene Handschrift*. What was more unfortunate for the German historical novel is that in these books he opened the door to an inartistic didacticism, a desire to be historically instructive, which has proved fatal to this form of fiction in modern Germany.

The development of the historical novel on antiquarian lines is to be seen especially in the work of Georg Ebers and Felix Dahn. Ebers (1857-98) was professor of Egyptology in Leipzig, and made his reputation by a bold and novel attempt to embody the results of his science in a romance of ancient Egypt, *Eine ägyptische Königstochter* (1864). This book was followed by a long series of historical novels on similar lines, ranging in their subjects from biblical times and antiquity to the Reformation. Ebers's strength lay in his faculty of reproducing and synthesising the conditions of a remote historical past; but apart from this, his books are commonplace, sentimental stories, of no distinctive literary worth. The same criticism applies generally to the historical

fiction of Felix Dahn (born 1834), whose scholarly investigations into the early history of the Germanic peoples (*Die Könige der Germanen*, 1861-72) are of real importance. Even Dahn's most popular novel, *Ein Kampf um Rom* (1876), a story of the Gothic invasion of the Roman empire, becomes, when stripped of its historical deckings, merely a not very original novel of sensational happenings. The German movement is analogous to that represented in England by the historical novels of Bulwer Lytton, whose rehabilitations of past ages show, it may be, less knowledge and conscientious study, but more literary power.

But all these writers pale before Gottfried Keller (1819-90), the greatest German novelist of the middle of the nineteenth century. Keller was born at Zürich on July 18, 1819, and grew up in the conviction that his natural bent lay in painting. He spent two years in Munich studying painting, then gave it up for literature. Between 1850 and 1855 he was in Berlin, where he wrote his first romance, *Der grüne Heinrich* (1854-55). *Der grüne Heinrich* is the last of the great Romantic novels that trace their lineage back in the direct line to *Wilhelm Meister*. Like its model, it is the history of a young man's apprenticeship to life, the record of a would-be artist's struggles, temptations, and dreams up to the point where he grows courageous enough to face the truth that he has chosen the wrong vocation. The book has little form and little story to tell, but no novel of the nineteenth century is richer in poetic beauties than this uneventful story into which Keller, with Romantic subjectivity, has woven much both of the "Dichtung" and the "Wahrheit" of his own life. Keller's powers are, however, seen to even better advantage in the "Novelle" or short story. In 1856 and in 1874 appeared two volumes entitled *Die Leute von Seldwyla*; in 1872, *Sieben Legenden*; in 1878, *Züricher Novellen*, and 1882, *Das Sinngedicht*. The stories which make up these collections are of unequal value, but the best of them, such as *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe*,

*Das Fähnlein der sieben Aufrechten*, *Der Landvogt von Greifensee*, are unsurpassed in the literature of the century. As in his long novel, a certain formlessness, combined with a blunt, unsentimental style, has stood in the way of the widest popularity; but his vision is extraordinarily true, and his imagination reveals powers of Romantic insight in which he was not approached by any other German writer of his time. In 1861 Keller was appointed "erster Staatsschreiber" of the canton of Zürich, a position which he occupied for fifteen years; he retired in 1876 and died in 1890. He has left one other long novel, *Martin Salander*, published in 1886, which shows, however, some falling-off in his powers. As a lyric poet (*Gedichte*, 1846; *Neuere Gedichte*, 1851), his originality is no less marked than in his prose works, and he deservedly takes a high place in an age which, as far as lyric poetry was concerned, was content to move in traditional grooves.

Theodor Storm (1817-88), the North German master of the mid-century "Novelle," forms another link between the old Romanticism and the modern spirit. But Storm stood more under the shadow of the Romantic traditions than his Swiss contemporary. His *Gedichte* (1853) are, for the most part, influenced by Eichendorff; and all his writings, whether prose or verse, are filled with a Romantic love for the moors and coasts of his Schleswig-Holstein home. His "Novellen" fall into two groups; the older ones, such as *Immensee* (1852), *Im Sonnenschein* (1854), *Ein grünes Blatt* (1855), are pessimistic in tone, and delight in retrospect and resignation; while a second group includes the more realistic, psychological, and even dramatic stories, which he cultivated from 1877 on. The best examples of this second group are *Psyche* (1877), *Aquis Submersus* (1877), *Renate* (1878)—the two latter belonging to a series of realistically archaic "Chronik-novellen." Storm's last two stories, *John Ricw'* (1886) and *Der Schimmelreiter* (1888), bear witness to his desire to keep abreast of the modern movement in fiction towards psychological realism.



The third of the leading German short-story writers of this period is Paul Heyse (born 1830), whose first volume of *Novellen* appeared as early as 1855. This was followed by an almost endless series of short stories—*Meraner Novellen* (1864), *Moralische Novellen* (1869 and 1878), *Troubadour-Novellen* (1882), etc.—which show a marvellously fertile imagination and invention. Heyse is superior both to Keller and Storm in the matter of form. A passionate lover of Italy, he began his life as a student of the Romance literatures and learned from them a lesson in style which he has never forgotten. He fashions his stories with the eye of the sculptor or the painter; beauty of form and expression is the constant end he has in view, however much he may be tempted by problems of piquant psychological interest to wander into irrelevant byways. And yet, although Heyse has outlived both Keller and Storm, his work has been less able to stand the test of time than theirs. His style seems nowadays too scintillating and clever to be sincere, and the types of character and incident which attract him, belong rather to the "Young German" era than to our modern time. The best of his "Novellen" still remain the early Italian ones, where his objectivity is most complete and his vision least warped by personal prejudices.

Heyse has also written several long novels, of which one at least, *Kinder der Welt* (1873), is of the first importance. *Kinder der Welt* is a "Zeitroman" and the representative novel of its time; its main theme is the antagonism between the "children of the world" and the "children of God," which was a very real one to the generation which came through the midcentury conflict between orthodoxy and science; but the new forces of pessimism, of social democracy, and imperialism also play a large part in the book. A second novel, *Im Paradiese* (1876), deals more exclusively with Munich artist-circles, and did not make so wide an appeal; while Heyse's more recent novels are, with the exception of *Der Roman der Stiftsdame* (1886), mainly occupied with

attacks on modern literary movements with which Heyse is not in sympathy. As a dramatist, Heyse has failed to win a permanent place for himself in the repertory of the German theatre, but some of his plays, especially *Hans Lange* (1866) and *Colberg* (1868), are classic in their well-balanced form and polished style.

Gutzkow's most immediate successor was Friedrich Spielhagen (1829-1911), a much more militant representative of the social novel than Freytag. His *Problematische Naturen* (1860) deals, like Gutzkow's *Ritter vom Geiste*, with the period of the Revolution of 1848, but in a more modern way; it is to that epoch what *Kinder der Welt* is to the later sixties. Spielhagen here holds the mirror up to the generation that had come through the fever and the fret of 1848, and voices its hopes and aspirations and despairs. The phrase "problematic natures" was originally Goethe's, and is applied to those vacillating, indecisive people who are unequal to any situation in which they happened to be placed, and unable to obtain either satisfaction or happiness from life. Spielhagen's hero, Oswald Stein, who dies fighting in the Revolution of 1848, is such a nature, a dreamer of dreams, for whom the enigma of life remains to the end unsolved. *Problematische Naturen* was followed by *In Reih' und Glied* (1866) and *Hammer und Amboss* (1869), excellent novels, in which the socialistic and economic ideas of the time form the background. Spielhagen was an exceedingly voluminous writer, but his development as a literary artist did not keep pace with his ideas, which remained to the last in sympathy with all that was liberal and advanced in German thought. Of his later books, hardly more than one, namely, *Sturmflut* (1876), which deals with the financial crises in Berlin after the Franco-German War, can stand comparison with his earlier masterpieces.

These are the leading novelists of this period. Of the many minor writers of fiction mention may be made of two German-American writers, Charles Sealsfield, whose real name was K. A. Postl (1793-1864), and Friedrich

Gerstaecker (1816-72), both of whom have left vivid if somewhat highly coloured sketches and novels of American life. The works of the Gräfin Ida Hahn-Hahn (1805-80), again, are surrounded by an atmosphere of catholic asceticism, and describe aspects of the social life of their time which lay outside the range of the "Young Germans" and their immediate successors.

crude brutality of this tragedy, the figure of Judith stands out as a type of dramatic heroine that was new to the dramatic literature of Europe. In *Genoveva* (1843), Hebbel's second play, he went back to a theme of which the Romantic poets were fond, but he treated it in a quite unromantic and modern way; in his hands it becomes a psychological study of an uncontrollable passion against a picturesque mediæval background. *Maria Magdalene* (1844) is a "bürgerliche Tragödie," an excellently constructed play of the type that had come down from Lessing and Schiller; but with his love for the *bizarre* in human relations, and his tendency to accentuate the psychological problem, Hebbel has invested his simple townsfolk with thoughts and emotions which often seem too complex for their station in life.

The series of Hebbel's greater dramas began with *Herodes und Mariamne* in 1850. The Jewish story, which in its original form presents a complicated enough psychological problem, is treated with boldness and originality. In Hebbel's eyes Herodes loves Mariamne with a superhuman passion that stretches out its arms even beyond the grave; the play becomes a tragedy of marriage, in which love alone is unable to make up for that infringement of the rights of the woman's individuality of which Herodes is guilty in his treatment of Mariamne. Here Hebbel is clearly the predecessor of the drama of the later nineteenth century, and particularly of that of Ibsen. The same or a similar ethic theme is presented in historic guise in the tragedy of *Agnes Bernauer* (1852), in which the rights of the individual are brought into conflict with the claims of the state; cold political reasoning demands the sacrifice of Agnes, a sacrifice which, like that of Schiller's *Maria Stuart*, is doleful rather than tragic. In *Gyges und sein Ring* (1856), the fable of which comes from Herodotus, Hebbel found a subject peculiarly adapted to his strange talent. In the centre of the action again stands a woman, who resents the slight on her personality inflicted on her by her own husband, and wipes out the disgrace by murder and suicide. Of

all Hebbel's tragedies this seems the one in which the conflict has most vraisemblance and is least at variance with normal human experience; it is also, as poetry, the most uniformly sustained.

Hebbel's last and most ambitious work, *Die Nibelungen* (1862), is a trilogy on which he spent seven years. The immediate stimulus was a mediocre tragedy by Raupach, *Der Nibelungenhort*, in which his wife had made an unforgettable impression upon him as Kriemhild; but to interpret in terms of his own delicate psychological art the rough mediæval simplicity of the German national epic had, no doubt, a fascination for Hebbel's genius. He regarded the *Nibelungenlied* as a picture in outline, in which he had to fill in the psychological details. He put, moreover, his powers to a peculiarly severe test by accepting the epic virtually as he found it; he altered little or nothing, unless in so far as it was necessary for dramatic purposes to concentrate the action; such additions as he made—for instance, the ethic conflict between the new Christianity and the old heathendom, which forms the background—were only by way of interpretation. He retained as far as he could the simplicity of the characters, and in Hagen and in the Kriemhild of the closing drama, *Kriemhilds Rache*, he has created convincing dramatic figures of tragic dignity and grandeur; but, on the whole, the limitations which the poet set himself were detrimental to the full development of his peculiar talent. The trilogy is neither genuinely mediæval nor genuinely modern. At his death Hebbel left, like Schiller, a tragedy on the subject of *Demetrius* (1864); he is also the author of several comedies, *Der Diamant* (1847), *Der Rubin* (1851), *Michel Angelo* (1855), but these are of subordinate interest. Among his non-dramatic writings his *Gedichte* (1842, 1848, 1857) are remarkable for their strength and originality, although lacking in the suaver qualities of the German lyric; his epic idyll, *Mutter und Kind* (1859), is a contribution to the form of literature on which Goethe had set his stamp in *Hermann und Dorothea*; and his *Tagebücher*,

which occupy four volumes of his works, afford a glimpse into the workshop of a poet to which it would be difficult to find a parallel in any other modern literature.

Hebbel's contemporary, Otto Ludwig (1813-65), was a very different type of man. By birth a Thuringian, he was one of those "problematic natures" in which the period was so rich; he lived isolated from the world and suffered keenly under its rebuffs. His two most important dramas, *Der Erbförster* (1850) and *Die Makkabäer* (1853), are, to a certain extent, supplementary to Hebbel's; they are no less modern, but in quite a different way. Ludwig is a realist, in so far as his strength lay in the observance of detail and the faithful reproduction of *milieu*; and although he avoids the complicated psychological realism of Hebbel's character-drawing, character is to him no less the mainspring of dramatic action. But Ludwig's dramatic work suffered from his preoccupation with theory and a self-consciousness which led him to model and remodel his work until it lost all its original spontaneity. He was, as is to be seen from his *Shakespeare-Studien*, an uncompromising admirer of Shakespeare, and this blinded him to the merits of other dramatists and other forms of the drama. His comedies are ineffective, and *Der Erbförster*, in spite of its somewhat sensational and melodramatic plot, has remained the only one of his plays which is still occasionally to be seen on the stage. As a novelist, however, Ludwig is still a very real force in German literature. Here his finely chiselled style, the delicacy of his descriptions of nature, and his delight in the infinitely little, found far fuller scope than in the drama. His *Zwischen Himmel und Erde* (1856) is one of the finest German stories of the middle of the century; and its perfect sincerity makes it as fresh and vital to-day as when it was written. Hardly less interesting are the two stories of Thuringian village life, *Die Heiterkeit* and *Aus dem Regen in die Traufe* (1857).

Of the three dramatists born in the year 1813, Richard Wagner (1813-83) undoubtedly left the deepest mark on

his time; but Wagner had the advantage of being not only a born dramatist, but also a musician of the first rank. Born in Leipzig, he went through a musical apprenticeship in provincial German theatres; in 1839 he visited Paris in the quest of a success he could not find at home. The disappointments and privations of these Paris years are reflected in the stories of *Ein deutscher Musiker in Paris* (1840-41). Meanwhile his one "grand" opera, *Rienzi* (1842), had met with some favour in Germany, and in Paris he wrote *Der fliegende Holländer* (1843), on a weird ballad-like theme, which broke with the operatic traditions of the time. This was followed by the two music-dramas, *Tannhäuser und der Sängerkrieg auf Wartburg* (1845) and *Lohengrin* (1850). These are typically Romantic works, Romantic both in form and ideas; and they remained throughout the whole nineteenth century Wagner's most popular operas. In 1849 he was involved in the revolutionary movement in Dresden and obliged to flee to Switzerland. Here he wrote the three treatises which contain the theoretical principles of his art, *Die Kunst und die Revolution* (1849), *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft* (1850), and *Oper und Drama* (1851). In these books Wagner brought to clear expression ideas that had busied German writers on the theory of the drama since the eighteenth century; he maintained that the highest model for the national drama of the Germans was the drama of ancient Greece; that is to say, music, acting, and painting, should lend their combined aid to interpret a dramatic theme of national significance. Above all, he insisted that music should again become what it had been in earlier times, a means to the dramatic and poetic end, and not, as the Italians of the early nineteenth century had made it, an end in itself.

The trilogy, or rather tetralogy, *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, written in 1853, is an illustration of what Wagner regarded as a German national drama. The poem was not published until ten years later, and its musical composition occupied him, with interruptions,

from 1853 to 1870. The two first dramas, *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, were performed at Munich in 1869 and 1870; the other two, *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*, not until 1876, when the whole work was produced in the "Festspielhaus" at Bayreuth. This performance of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, which Wagner carried through in spite of almost insuperable difficulties, might be described as the first national achievement of German art, after the establishment of the new empire. *Der Ring des Nibelungen* is written in a kind of alliterative verse, this being in Wagner's opinion better adapted for singing than rhymed verse; and it is based to a larger extent on the Scandinavian sagas than on the German *Nibelungenlied*. Wagner fused the story of the *Volsungasaga* with the German traditions of Siegfried and the Burgundians, and retained the mythological background of the northern saga. By this means he was able to utilise picturesque events that appealed to his imagination, such as the rainbow-bridge to Valhalla, Brünnhilde's fire-girt mountain, and Siegfried's fight with the dragon, and to embody in the whole an ethic idea which assumes grandiose proportions in the final catastrophe of the "twilight of the gods." *Der Ring des Nibelungen* gives voice to the pessimism of the nineteenth century as hardly another work of its time; poets like Lenau and Leopardi have given finer, more intimately personal expression to their despair, but Wagner rises superior to purely personal issues; his pessimism is closely akin to Schopenhauer's, with whose work he was not, however, familiar until after his poem was written.

More closely identified with Schopenhauer's philosophy is the pessimism of the music-drama *Tristan und Isolde* (1865), where, with a masterly command of dramatic effect, Wagner succeeded in forging out of the loose and endless narrative of Gottfried's poem a love-tragedy of Greek dignity and strength. In 1868 followed *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, in which he endeavoured to realise that ideal of the Romantic theorists, a national German comedy which should embody the life and



aspirations of the German "Volk." For *Die Meistersinger*, Wagner not only made extensive studies in the literature of the sixteenth century, but he also borrowed situations and motives from Hoffmann's *Meister Martin der Kufner und seine Gesellen*, and a drama *Hans Sachs*, by an Austrian dramatist, J. L. Deinhardstein. From the purely literary point of view, it is his most notable creation; no other German dramatist of the century has handled so complicated a theme with such technical mastery and such apparent spontaneity as he has done here. His last drama, *Parsifal*, a dramatisation of Wolfram's epic, as *Tristan und Isolde* had been of Gottfried's, was produced in 1882. The serene beauty and religious earnestness of this poem presents still another phase of Wagner's genius. *Parsifal* is steeped, like its predecessor, in pessimism, but it is a transfigured pessimism; for Wagner had gone the way of all pessimists, and turned to the fatalism of the East. But by 1882 the spell of Schopenhauer on the German mind had ceased to be all-powerful, and the younger generation was beginning to face life with more energy and hopefulness; *Parsifal* was felt rather to represent the close of its era than the beginning of a new one.

The other dramatic literature of this period is of comparatively small account; in the fifties and sixties the theatre was almost exclusively dominated by "Young German" ideas, and the playwrights who wrote for it, such as Robert Griepenkerl (1810-68), R. von Gottschall (1823-1910), O. von Redwitz (1823-91), and A. E. Brachvogel (1824-78), were, for the most part, belated "Young Germans." The most popular playwrights, the successors of Iffland and Kotzebue, were Roderich Benedix (1811-73) and Charlotte Birch-Pfeiffer (1800-68). In the following decade the German theatre suffered under the importation of French plays, and such serious writing as there was, tended to fall back into imitations of Schiller's drama. It was not until the beginning of the eighties that there was much hope for a removal of the stagnation into which theatre and drama had

fallen in Germany; meanwhile the initiative of Hebbel was forgotten.

In the epoch before the Franco-German War the only group of writers to whom the word "School" could be applied was that which the Bavarian king, Maximilian II., gathered round him in Munich from about 1850 onwards. The chief of these writers, in the earlier period at least, was Emanuel Geibel (1815-84), who has already been mentioned as a contributor to the political lyric of the earlier generation. His share in that movement was restricted to a collection of poems entitled *Zeitstimmen* (1841), the tone of which, moreover, is conciliatory and anti-revolutionary. Geibel's *Juniuslieder* (1847) contain, however, some of the most inspired purely lyric poetry of the revolutionary epoch. In 1851 he accepted the royal invitation to Munich and spent seven years there, the most productive years of his life. To this period belong the longer poems, *Der Mythos vom Dampf*, *Der Bildhauer des Hadrian*, *Der Tod des Tiberius*, and the cycle of lyrics, *Ada*, in memory of his wife, whom he lost in 1855, all of these being included in the collection of *Neue Gedichte* (1857). Geibel was the heir of the vast literary tradition of the Romantic lyric, and it proved too much for him; his own poetic individuality was not strong enough to allow him to strike out a distinctive path for himself. Gifted with undeniable lyric powers, he has left less mark on the development of German poetry than any other of the greater lyric poets. Geibel was also a dramatist, but his plays, of which the comedy, *Meister Andrea* (1855), and the drama, *Brunhild* (1858), the subject of which is drawn from the *Nibelungenlied*, may be mentioned, are deficient in dramatic force and in understanding for the needs of the theatre.

Friedrich Bodenstedt (1819-92), another poet of the Munich circle, made his reputation with a single book, the *Lieder des Mirza Schaffy* (1851), which was extraordinarily popular in its day. There is, however, little originality either of thought or lyric inspiration behind his somewhat shallow imitations of oriental poetry, and the

interest in them soon waned. Graf Adolf Friedrich von Schack (1815-94) is better remembered nowadays as an art-patron than as a man of letters; his original verse does not display much talent, but he made some admirable translations of oriental, Spanish, and Portuguese poets, and his *Geschichte der dramatischen Literatur und Kunst in Spanien* (1845-46) established his reputation as an authority on Spanish literature. Other poets of the circle were the unhappy Heinrich Leuthold (1827-79), whose *Gedichte* (1879) have something of the tragic earnestness of Lenau's pessimism; Hermann Lingg (1820-95), the author of an ambitious epic, *Die Völkerwanderung* (1866-68), and Martin Greif (the pseudonym of Hermann Frey, 1839-1911), whose lyrics and dramas, although written under Romantic influences, show no signs of Romantic decadence.

One of the most widely popular writers of the Munich circle was Joseph Viktor von Scheffel (1826-86). His poetry, especially the verse-romance *Der Trompeter von Säckingen* (1854), has verve and charm, in spite of an excess of that sentimentality which was the least valuable heritage of Romanticism; it appealed exactly to the tastes of the day, and gives an idea, if not of the best the Munich poets could do, at least of the public taste to which they had to appeal. On a higher level stands Scheffel's historical romance, *Ekkehard, eine Geschichte aus dem zehnten Jahrhundert* (1857), an excellent historical novel, in which the author was poet enough not to substitute, as so many of his contemporaries did, mere antiquarian research for poetic imagination. Scheffel made the story in verse popular, and he had several more or less successful followers, such as Julius Wolff (1834-1910), author of *Der Rattenfänger von Hameln* (1875) and *Der wilde Jäger* (1877), Rudolf Baumbach (1840-1905), whose *Zlatorog* appeared in 1878, and F. W. Weber (1813-94). The last-mentioned of these was a Westphalian catholic, of manly and independent talent; his epic romance *Dreizehnlinden* (1878), in spite of a somewhat obtrusive religious tendency, certainly deserved its popu-

larity. These years appear to have also brought a certain revival of popular interest in the epic; the most original representative of this form of poetry was Wilhelm Jordan (1819-1904). Jordan began his career in the political epoch; his philosophy, which obtrudes to an excessive degree in his poetry, is that of the scientific reaction at the middle of the century, and his chief work, the epic *Die Nibelunge* (1869-72), is in its patriotic fervour not free from the tendencies of the "Young German" epoch. But Jordan, no doubt, impressed his contemporaries by his vigorous personality, his imagination, and his zeal. About the same time, poets like Karl Simrock (1802-76) and Wilhelm Hertz (1835-1902) were, with their excellent translations, making the great Middle High German epics themselves a force in modern life.

The undeniable lack of artistic seriousness in the literature of the Munich group was atoned for by a strongly marked pessimistic strain. In this period the zenith of German pessimism was reached; it had been made palatable to the time by Eduard von Hartmann (1834-1906), with his *Philosophie des Unbewussten* (1869), a kind of compromise between the pessimism of Schopenhauer and Hegelianism. In literature the pessimistic note is to be found in the verse of Heinrich Leuthold, who has just been mentioned, and in the still more despairing *Gedichte* (1870) of the deaf and ultimately blind Moravian poet Heinrich Landesmann, who wrote under the name of "Hieronymus Lorm" (1821-1902). Sombre, too, in spite of occasional exotic touches, is the poetry of Ferdinand von Schmid, known to literature as "Dranmor" (1823-88). The chief representative of pessimism among the poets of this age was, however, the Austrian Robert Hamerling (1838-89), whose reputation rests on two epics, *Ahasver in Rom* (1866), on the theme of the Wandering Jew, and *Der König von Sion* (1869), a historical epic dealing with the rising of the Anabaptists in Münster in 1534. These are perhaps the most ambitious experiments in epic poetry which the age has to show. Hamerling was unquestionably highly gifted; he had

grandiose ideas, a sense for colour and splendour, and a mastery of dramatic effects; and yet, in spite of all this, the reader is conscious of a certain emptiness in his verse, a suspicion of lack of sincerity, which reduces the general impression of his work to one of rhetoric and theatrical effect. Hamerling's poetry has not, it must be admitted, stood the test of time well. A drama, *Danton Robespierre* (1871), a philosophic novel, *Aspasia* (1876), and a satire on modern life, *Homunculus* (1888), failed to win the enthusiastic admiration which had greeted the epics.

The chief representative of the novel in the Munich circle was Paul Heyse, who has already been discussed in an earlier chapter; and with him might be associated W. H. Riehl (1823-97), whose finely chiselled *Kultur-geschichtliche Novellen* (1856) must be numbered among the best short stories of the time. But the master of the "Novelle" in this age was a fellow-countryman of Gottfried Keller, Konrad Ferdinand Meyer (1825-98). Meyer, who made a name for himself as a lyric and epic poet before he turned to fiction, has left us a series of short stories, all distinguished by a polished style and perfect workmanship. *Jürg Jenatsch* appeared in 1876, *Der Heilige*, a story of Thomas à Becket, in 1880, and these were followed in rapid succession by *Das Amulet*, *Der Schuss von der Kanzel*, *Plautus im Nonnenkloster*, *Die Hochzeit des Mönchs*, and *Die Versuchung des Pescara*. As a stylist Meyer has an Austrian counterpart in Ferdinand von Saar (1845-1906), whose *Novellen aus Österreich* (1877-97) are, however, tinged by a pessimism which is foreign to Meyer's robust genius. The longer novel of this epoch is represented by W. Jensen (born 1837) and A. Wilbrandt (1837-1911), of whom the latter endeavoured to keep pace with more modern developments of German fiction, even although he remained in style and manner faithful to the older school. Wilbrandt was also a dramatist of some distinction, but his conservative tendencies are more marked in his drama than in his fiction. The chief humourists of the period

are Wilhelm Raabe (1831-1910), whose work has a Dickensian flavour, without Dickens's optimism; and Wilhelm Busch (1832-1908), author of the famous *Max und Moritz* (1865), *Der heilige Antonius* (1870), and other poems, in which the wit is often eclipsed by somewhat cruel irony.

The period during which the Munich School dominated German literature was, although unproductive of work of the first order in poetry, markedly active in other fields: it was the age in which Germany under Bismarck was fighting her way to the front rank of European peoples. This alone diverted the attention of the Germans from literature, and it is not surprising that in a time of such great political changes the interest in historical studies should have shown no abatement. As the representative historian of this later period, Heinrich von Treitschke (1834-96) may be mentioned, whose most important work is his *Deutsche Geschichte im neunzehnten Jahrhundert* (1879-94). In the train of history came a whole new science of "Kulturgeschichte." The history of art was taken up again by German writers with enthusiasm and judgment, and in literary history and criticism Hermann Hettner (1821-82), Rudolf Haym (1821-1901), Karl Hillebrand (1829-84), and Wilhelm Scherer (1828-1901), laid the basis for a more sincere and healthy attitude to literature than had been possible as long as "Young German" tendencies were in the air.

## CHAPTER XXV.

## GERMAN LITERATURE SINCE 1870.

It is perhaps less easy in the case of German literature during the last generation to form a judgment that can lay claim to finality, than in that of any other European literature in the same period. Even Italy affords in her recent literature no parallel to the change of intellectual horizon in Germany brought about by the new political conditions; for the creation of the kingdom of Italy could hardly be compared with Germany's realisation of what all her intellectual leaders since the new-birth of the nation in the Napoleonic era had dreamed. It is thus not surprising to find in the literature of modern Germany a certain tentative experimenting, which has resulted from the conscious desire to imperialise it, as it were, and to bring it into harmony with the altered ideals of the national life. And with this experimenting has also come a lack of critical balance—on the one hand a jubilant over-confidence in the splendour of achievement, on the other, an equally reprehensible contempt for the insignificance of poetic, as contrasted with political achievement. But since 1871, or at least since the eighties, when the new generation of citizens of the Empire began to take over the leadership, Germany has, it must at least be said, been more in earnest about her literature and inspired by more serious ideals than any other people in Europe.

The general tendency of the age has been, like that of the Romantic period at the beginning of the century,

towards bringing life and literature into closer touch with each other, and infusing more "holy earnestness" into the pursuit of art and poetry. The literature before the war, based as it, for the most part, was on a threadbare and effete tradition of the idealism of Schiller, had to give place—under the influence of foreign masters like Flaubert, De Maupassant, and Zola, of Turgenev, Dostoevsky, and Tolstoi, and of Ibsen, Björnson, and Strindberg—to a new realism which was determined to be done with false conventions of poetry and to make literature once more the direct expression of the life and thought of the day. As an inevitable consequence of this reaction, Schiller, the acknowledged national poet of the greater part of the nineteenth century, had to yield the first place in the national esteem to the master of classic realism, Goethe. Along with this change came an inevitable change in the philosophic horizon. Hegel, whose magic web had so long lain over German thought, was at last deposed; his philosophy succumbed before a revival of interest in the great master of the eighteenth century, Kant; in the same way the renunciatory fervour of Schopenhauer, who had only just entered into his kingdom in German thought in the years before the war, had to yield to a new optimism, which believed in the power of the will and the personality. This new individualism attained its mature expression with the most gifted writer of the last generation in Germany, Friedrich Nietzsche.

Born at Röcken near Lützen in 1844, Nietzsche first distinguished himself as a classical scholar, and became in 1869 Professor of Classics in Basel. In 1879 he was obliged to resign his chair owing to continued ill-health, and for the next ten years he led an unsettled life at Swiss and Italian health-resorts; in 1889 he became insane, and he died at Weimar in 1900. He began as a disciple of Schopenhauer's and a warm admirer of Richard Wagner's, and in 1872 published *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik*, a study of dramatic origins suggested by Wagner's theories. Between 1873 and 1876 followed four *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen*, in



which Nietzsche appears as the antagonist of many of the most cherished ideas of his time; he attacked the self-sufficiency of his countrymen after the war, especially D. F. Strauss's *Der alte und der neue Glaube* (1872), and he pointed to Schopenhauer and Wagner as the liberators of the age from its shallow "culture" and the dead hand of Hegelianism. Before, however, the last of these *Betrachtungen* had appeared, a breach had been formed between himself and Wagner. Although outwardly caused by the repugnance with which Nietzsche regarded his friend's methods of realising his ideals, the quarrel was at bottom due to a fundamental irreconcilability between the two men. Nietzsche's individualism and optimism were repelled by the resigned pessimism of Wagner's later creations; as he outgrew Schopenhauer, it was impossible for him to remain Wagnerian, and towards the end of his career his antagonism to Wagner became extremely marked. The chief writings of Nietzsche's later period are *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* (1878-80), *Morgenröte* (1881), *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (1882), which lead up to his masterpiece, *Also sprach Zarathustra* (1883-91). This remarkable work, half poetry, half philosophy, in which Nietzsche, under the guise of a poetic orientalism, seeks refuge from the deadening round of repetition in a doctrine of a higher and nobler manhood, is the greatest work of the last generation in German, and possibly in European literature. Apart from its ideas, which like all world-compelling ideas have called forth a virulent controversy, the melodious, biblical beauty of Nietzsche's language gives *Also sprach Zarathustra* a place among the masterpieces of modern prose literature. In 1886 followed *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, then *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, and lastly *Götzen-Dämmerung*. The completion of a fundamental work in which Nietzsche proposed to gather up the threads of his philosophy, *Der Wille zur Macht*, was prevented by the final catastrophe in his life.

Nietzsche is an individualist and an optimist; he declares war alike on Hegel and on Schopenhauer; he sees the salvation of the race in the subordination of the

herd to the great, strong man, the "Übermensch." Altruism is no longer in his eyes a virtue, but a sign of weakness. In this assertion of individualism Nietzsche presents an interesting parallel to the Romantic philosophers and poets who, nearly a century earlier, combated the levelling forces of the "Aufklärung" with a similarly uncompromising assertion of the rights of the individual. In his style and method of presenting his ideas, Nietzsche also resembles very closely such Romanticists as Novalis, Friedrich Schlegel, and Hölderlin; like these writers he is a thinker in aphorisms and an artist in the handling of words.

Again, as in the Romantic era, the lyric was the first form of literature to benefit by the revival of individualism. Nietzsche himself was a lyric poet of no small powers—his *Gedichte und Sprüche* were first collected in 1897—and his influence is to be traced on all the younger poets of the time. The revival of the modern lyric is usually dated from the *Adjutantenritte und andere Gedichte* (1883) of Detlev von Liliencron (1844-1909), a volume of virile and original verse. Liliencron set the fashion, and in his train the young poets of the time made a determined attempt to throw off the Romantic traditions and to create a new type of lyric expression in accordance with the spirit of the time. Their success seems the more remarkable when one remembers how strong the traditions were against which they had to fight. Of these poets mention may be made of G. Falke (born 1853), F. Avenarius (born 1856), Arno Holz (born 1863), K. Henckell (born 1864), K. Busse (born 1872), and more especially Richard Dehmel (born 1863), M. Dauthendey (born 1867), and Stefan George (born 1868). The lighter lyric of the so-called "Überbrettel" has been successfully cultivated by O. J. Bierbaum (1865-1910). Other forms of verse were, in this age of dominant realism, not much in favour, but mention may at least be made of the epic, *Das Lied der Menschheit* (1887 ff.), by the brothers Heinrich (born 1855) and Julius Hart (1859-1906).

The drama, too, benefited from the individualistic revival, and it was fortunate in finding a splendidly equipped national theatre prepared for it. Wagner's reform of the theatre, together with the example set by the Duke of Meiningen in his Court Theatre between 1866 and 1889, has raised the stage in Germany as an institution, to a rank it has never occupied before in Europe. Every town has now its established theatre, and prides itself on a repertory which includes not only the classical dramas of German literature, but also those of Sophocles and Shakespeare, Calderón and Molière. It would thus have been surprising had a revival of literary activity in Germany not taken advantage in the first instance of the theatre. The new dramatic literature inspired by French, Scandinavian, and Russian realism dates from the early works of Sudermann and Hauptmann at the end of the eighties, but the preparation of the preceding decade is also of interest. Men like the now forgotten Albert Lindner (1831-88) and the Austrian poet, Franz Nissel (1831-93), did not, in spite of their gifts, succeed in leaving any permanent mark on dramatic literature; and even dramatists with modern ideas like Arthur Fitger (1840-1909) and F. von Saar (1833-1906), who has been already mentioned, were unable to assert themselves in the rapid development of dramatic literature. It seemed, however, for a time as if Ernst von Wildenbruch (1845-1909) might have saved the traditions of national historical tragedy with his dramas on themes from national history, such as *Die Quitsows* (1888) and *Heinrich und Heinrichs Geschlecht* (1896); but Wildenbruch's talent was of too superficial and theatrical a kind to satisfy an age of realistic demands. A more genuine poet of the time was Ludwig Anzengruber (1839-89), who wrote powerful and effective dramas of Austrian peasant life; his *Pfarrer von Kirchfeld* (1870), *Der Meincidbauer* (1871), *Die Kreuzelschreiber* (1872), *Der G'wissenswurm* (1874), and *Doppelselbstmord* (1874) have, in spite of their dialect, which limits their appeal, high value. Only in their technique, which is a little out of date now,

and in their occasional lapses into a sentimentality which belongs to the conventions of literature rather than to life, do we feel that they belong to an age that has passed.

Hermann Sudermann (born 1857) is a dramatic realist who learned his best lessons from France, and his plays have in consequence attained a European celebrity. He began as a novelist, and in *Frau Sorge* (1887) produced one of the best modern German stories; this was followed by a romance of the Napoleonic invasion, *Der Katzensteg* (1889). His later works of fiction, such as *Es war* (1894) and *Das hohe Lied* (1908), deal with interesting ethical conflicts and problems, but with a tendency to sensationalism both of plot and style. The production of Sudermann's first play, *Die Ehre*, in 1888, marked the beginning of the new period in the history of the German theatre; its peculiar power lay in the treatment of an idea of very "actual" interest with a realism hitherto unknown to the German stage. *Die Ehre* was followed by a long series of dramas of modern life, of which the most interesting are *Sodoms Ende* (1890), *Heimat* (1893), *Das Glück im Winkel* (1895), *Johannisfeuer* (1900), and *Es lebe das Leben!* (1902). In *Johannes* (1898) he dealt with the story of John the Baptist, providing it, after the manner of Hebbel, with a modern psychological background, combined with a realism to which Hebbel did not aspire. Since 1902 Sudermann has produced several dramas, but these show no advance on his earlier work. His wide reputation is not undeserved, for he has succeeded in a higher degree than even his French masters in combining effective theatrical art with characters and ideas of vital interest to his contemporaries; but he has not helped materially to solve the problem of the German national drama of the future. His place in the evolution of the modern theatre is not unsimilar to that occupied by Iffland in Germany a hundred years earlier or, at a more recent date, by Dumas *fils* in France.

Much more was looked for by the theorists and prophets of the nineties in Germany from Gerhart Hauptmann (born 1862), a native of Silesia. Hauptmann is un-

questionably the most original German dramatist of this period, but he too has, so far, failed to fulfil the hopes that were placed upon him. His first drama, a crudely realistic tragedy of great promise, *Vor Sonnenaufgang* (1889), followed closely on Sudermann's *Ehre*; then came *Das Friedensfest* (1890), and in the following year *Einsame Menschen*, in the manner of Ibsen. His first important drama was *Die Weber* (1892), a powerful tragedy, which deals with the rising of the Silesian weavers in 1844. From this point on, Hauptmann has experimented in the most varied fields of dramatic writing. Besides full-blooded realistic plays like *Fuhrmann Henschel* (1898) and *Rose Berndt* (1903), he has given us delicate psychological studies like *Kollege Crampton* (1892) and *Michael Kramer* (1900), and robust realistic comedies such as *Der Biberpelz* (1893). Most interesting of all are the poetic, imaginative dramas which opened in 1893 with *Hanneles Himmelfahrt*, a wonderful reproduction of the feverish visions of a dying child, which was followed in 1897 by the allegorical dramatic fairy-tale *Die versunkene Glocke*. The last-mentioned play, with its combination of realistic Silesian figures, fantastic imaginings, and Romantic ideas of the artist's calling, is one of the most interesting of the whole period. The fantastic element predominates in later plays of this group, such as *Schluck und Jau* (1900) and *Und Pippa tanzt!* (1906). Hauptmann had less success with his historical tragedy, *Florian Geyer* (1895), and his psychological poetic dramas like *Der arme Heinrich* (1902), *König Karls Geisel* (1908), and *Griselda* (1909). He is also the author of a remarkable novel, *Der Narr in Christo, Emanuel Quint* (1911), which reproduces the gospel story amidst modern Silesian surroundings. In spite of his comparative lack of outward success, Hauptmann is the most interesting literary personality among modern German dramatists; no one has experimented in so wide a range as he, no one has fought more persistently against the tyranny of theatrical traditions.

Amongst the minor dramatists of this epoch, who,

together with Sudermann and Hauptmann, have helped to make the German stage of to-day an arena of intellectual and artistic activity, the most important are Richard Voss (born 1851), who with his *Alexandra* (1888), *Schuldig* (1890), *Die neue Zeit* (1891), and *Die blonde Kathrein* (1895), was to some extent a forerunner of the new school; Max Halbe (born 1865), author of *Jugend* (1893); W. Kirchbach (1857-1906); O. E. Hartleben (1864-1905); Ludwig Fulda (born 1862), author of several graceful, if somewhat conventional plays in verse, and an excellent translation of Molière, which has helped to retain that writer's comedies in the German repertory, and Frank Wedekind (born 1864). In Austria the drama has been no less actively cultivated, the leading writers here being Arthur Schnitzler (born 1862), author of *Anatol* (1893), *Liebelei* (1895), *Der grüne Kakadu* (1899), and *Der junge Medardus* (1910); Hermann Bahr (born 1863), a critic of distinction, whose plays (*Das Tschaperl*, 1898, *Der Apostel*, 1901, *Das Konzert*, 1909) have had considerable popularity in Germany as well as Austria; Hugo von Hofmannsthal (born 1874), the most poetically gifted of all, and Karl Schönherr (born 1869).

In face of this absorbing interest in the theatre in Germany, it is not surprising that the novel has for a time ceased to be what it was in the previous generation, the main vehicle of ideas; but it, too, under the influence of realism, and more particularly of Scandinavian and Russian models, entered upon a phase of development analogous to that of the drama. What Sudermann and Hauptmann were to the latter, a writer of an older generation, Theodor Fontane (1819-98), was to prose fiction. From the historical novel (*Vor dem Sturm*, 1878) Fontane gradually found his way to realism. His modern novels, *L'Adultera* (1882), *Irrungen, Wirrungen* (1887), *Stine* (1890), *Effi Briest* (1895) are amongst the best, produced in Germany under French influence, and the earliest of them were at once accepted as models by the younger writers. In the eighties and early nineties the purely

realistic novel, as cultivated by writers like M. G. Conrad (born 1846), Max Kretzer (born 1854), K. Bleibtreu (born 1859), and H. Conradi (1862-90), predominated. But just as Hauptmann turned from naturalism to the supernaturalism and imaginative faery of *Hanneles Himmelfahrt* and *Die versunkene Glocke*, so the German fiction of the period soon abandoned the naturalism of the French theorists. A younger generation has sprung up which, without denying the enormous gain in truth and sincerity which the realistic method has brought with it, employs that method as a means to a higher end, instead of as an end in itself. To this group may be numbered Wilhelm von Polenz (1861-1903), Gustav Frenssen (born 1863), author of *Jörn Uhl* (1901); Hermann Hesse (born 1877), Jakob Wassermann (born 1873), and above all, Thomas Mann (born 1875), in whose *Buddenbrooks* (1901) the national traditions of the middle of the nineteenth century have been revived. The novel of the province in this period is represented by the Styrian writer Peter K. Rosegger (born 1843), a disciple of Anzengruber. Characteristic of the latest development of German fiction is also the large number of excellent novels by women-writers, such as Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach (born 1830), Ricarda Huch (born 1864), Isolde Kurz (born 1862), Helene Böhlau (born 1859), and Klara Viebig (born 1860).

The nineteenth century is one of extraordinary richness and variety in Germany's literature, an epoch of more momentous experimenting and initiative than is to be found in all the other literatures of Europe taken together; in her gospel of Romanticism, in her drama and lyric, if not in the novel, Germany has been the chief source of those new and revolutionary ideas on which France ultimately set the stamp of cosmopolitanism. It is true that the literature of this period does not leave the same impression of greatness as that of the eighteenth century: compared with the large number of interesting writers of minor genius, there are no poets who stand out solitary and pre-eminent like Lessing, Goethe, or

Schiller; but, on the other hand, there is not that enormous gulf between the leaders and the rank and file which is so disappointing a feature in the German literature of the eighteenth century. Without the three great writers just named, German classical literature sinks back into comparative insignificance, whereas the average achievement of the nineteenth century is interesting enough to be studied even in writers who cannot be placed in the very first rank.



# CHRONOLOGICAL TABLES.

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## FROM THE FOURTH CENTURY TO THE END OF THE OLD HIGH GERMAN PERIOD.

- 341. Wulfila (311-383) consecrated Bishop of the Visigoths. Gothic Translation of the Bible.
- ca. 375-ca. 450. Migrations (*Völkerwanderung*).
- 437. Annihilation of the Burgundians by the Huns. [449. Beginning of the Germanic Invasion of England.]
- 456. Attila's death.
- 475-526. Theodorich the Great.
- 480-750. The Merovingian period.
- ca. 500-ca. 600. The Second Sound-shifting (Separation of High German from Low German). [ca. 650. *Beowulf*.]
- ca. 680-ca. 755. Winfrith (Bonifacius). Old High German *Glosses*. [ca. 700. The *Lindisfarne Gospels*. 673-735. Bede. Caedmon. Cynewulf.]
- 768-814. Charles the Great (Charlemagne). 735-804. Alcuin. Translations of the Liturgy. Collection of Songs.
- ca. 780. The *Wessobrunner Gebet*.
- ca. 800. The *Hilfstrandslied*. *Monster Fragmente*.
- 814-840. Ludwig the Pious.
- ca. 830. The Old Saxon *Heliand* and *Genesis*.
- ca. 835. Translation of Tatian's *Gospel-Harmony*. Rabanus Maurus in Fulda.
- 842. Division of the Carolingian Empire. The *Strassburger Eide*.
- 843-876. Ludwig the German. [840-901. King Alfred.]
- ca. 850. *Merzlied*.
- 863 and 871. The *Evangelienbuch* of Otfrid.
- 881. The *Luthi's Lied*.

- 919-1024. The Saxon Emperors (Heinrich I., Otto I., Otto II., Otto III., Heinrich II.)  
 ca. 930. Ekkehard's *Waltharius*.  
 ca. 940. *Ecbasis captivi*.  
 ca. 930-ca. 1000. Hrotsuith of Gandersheim.  
 ca. 952-1022. Notker of St Gall. [ca. 955-ca. 1020. Aelfric.]  
 ca. 1000. *De Heinricho*.  
 1024-39. Konrad II.  
 ca. 1030. *Ruodlieb*. [ca. 1040. *Vie de Saint Alexis*.]  
 1039-56. Heinrich III.

## MIDDLE HIGH GERMAN PERIOD.

- ca. 1050-1100. Transition from Old to Middle High German.  
 1056-1106. Heinrich IV.  
 ca. 1060. *Memento mori*.  
 1063. The *Ezzolied*. Willeram, *Das hohe Lied*. [1066. The Battle of Hastings.]  
 ca. 1070. *Genesis*. *Exodus*. *Dreikönigsspiel*.  
 1076-85. Heinrich's conflict with Pope Gregory VII. (Hildebrand).  
 ca. 1080. The *Annolied*. [The *Chanson de Roland* and the earliest 'chansons de gestes'.]  
 1095-99. The First Crusade.  
 1106-25. Heinrich V. Hartmann's *Vom Glauben*. Frau Ava (died 1127).  
 1125-37. Lothar the Saxon.  
 ca. 1130. Lamprecht's *Alexanderlied*. *Vorauer Genesis*.  
 ca. 1135. Konrad's *Rolandlied*.  
 1138-52. Konrad III. (the first Hohenstaufen emperor).  
 ca. 1130-50. The *Kaiserchronik*. [ca. 1079-1142. Abélard. ca. 1100-54. Geoffrey of Monmouth.]  
 1147-49. The Second Crusade.  
 ca. 1150. *Isengrimus*. [ca. 1155. Wace, *Roman de Brut*.]  
 1152-90. Friedrich I. (Barbarossa).  
 ca. 1160. *König Rother*. Heinrich von Melk, *Von des tôdes gehugede and Priesterleben*. [Wace's *Brut* (1155). Benoît de Sainte More, *Roman de Troie*.]  
 ca. 1170. Wernher, *Lieder von der Jungfrau*. *Anegenge*. *Floris und Blancheſtur*. Heinrich von Veldeke, *Servatius*. [ca. 1170-80. Chrétien de Troyes, *Yvain*, *Perceval*.]  
 ca. 1160-ca. 1190. 'Springtime of the Minnesang.' Kurenberg, Dietmar von Aist, the Burggraf von Regensburg, Meinloh von Sevelingen, Friedrich von Hausen (died 1190), Herger, 'Der Spervogel').

- ca. 1175-86. Heinrich von Veldeke's *Eneit*.  
 ca. 1180. Eilhart von Oberg, *Tristrant*. *Hersog Ernst*. *Salman und Morolf*. *Orendel*. *Oswald*. Wernher von Elmendorf, *Tugendlehre*. Heinrich der Glîchezære, *Reinhart*. [Marie de France, *Fables*.]  
 1184. Barbarossa's Festival at Mainz.  
 1188. Tegernsee *Antichrist* drama.  
 1190-97. Heinrich VI. 1190-92. The Third Crusade. [1189-99. Richard Cœur de Lion.]  
 ca. 1190-1200. The *Nibelungenlied*.  
 ca. 1190. Albrecht von Halberstadt, *Metamorphosen*. Walther von der Vogelweide's earliest lyrics. Heinrich von Morungen. Reinmar von Hagenau (died ca. 1210).  
 ca. 1191. Hartmann von Aue, *Erec*.  
 ca. 1195. Ulrich von Zatzikoven, *Lanzelet*. Herbort von Fritslar, *Lied von Troja*. The *Lucidarius*.  
 ca. 1198. Walther leaves Vienna. [ca. 1137-ca. 1208. Walter Map.]  
 1198-1208. Philipp of Swabia. 1198-1215. Otto IV. 1198-1216. Pope Innocent III. 1200-4. The Fourth Crusade.  
 ca. 1200. Hartmann's *Gregorius*; *Der arme Heinrich*.  
 ca. 1205. Hartmann's *Iwein*. Wirnt von Gravenberg, *Wigalois*. *Der Winsbeke*. [Layamon's *Brut*. The *Ormulum*.]  
 ca. 1205-10. Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival*.  
 ca. 1210-15. Gottfried von Strassburg, *Tristan*. Wolfram's *Titulel* and *Willehalm*. *Gudrun*. [ca. 1205-13. Villehardouin. *Chronique*.]  
 1212. Walther's political activity on behalf of Otto IV.  
 1215-50. Friedrich II. 1216-20. The Fifth Crusade. [1215. Magna Charta in England.]  
 1216. Death of the Landgraf Hermann of Thuringia.  
 ca. 1215. Thomasin von Zirclære, *Der ielsche Gast*. [Robert de Boron.]  
 ca. 1220. Heinrich von Türlin, *Die Krone*. Konrad Fleck, *Flöre und Blancheffur*. 'Der Stricker.' *Biterolf und Dietlieb*. *Der Rosengarten*. *Laurin*. [The *Anceren Riwele*. *Owl and Nightingale*.]  
 ca. 1225. Rudolf von Ems (died 1254), *Der gute Gerhard*, *Barlaam und Josaphat*. Eike von Repgowe, *Der Sachsenspiegel*.  
 1227. Walther takes Friedrich's part against the Pope.  
 ca. 1225-40. The Later Minnesang. Neidhart von Reuenthal (ca. 1180-ca. 1230). Hiltbold von Schwangau (ca. 1221-56). Ulrich von Singenberg. Leuthold von Säben. Reinmar von Zweter (ca. 1200-60). Burkhart von Hohenfels. Ulrich von Winterstetten. Gottfried von Neifen (ca. 1234-55).

- ca. 1217-30. Freidank, *Bescheidenheit*.
- ca. 1235. Rudolf von Ems, *Wilhelm von Orlens*. [ca. 1237. G. de Lorris, *Roman de la Rose*. Matthew Paris.]
- ca. 1240. Ulrich von Türheim. Rudolf von Ems, *Weltchronik*. Reinbot von Duren, *Der heilige Georg*. Wernher, *Meier Helmbrecht*.
- 1248-50. The Sixth Crusade.
- ca. 1250. Willem's *Reinaert de Vos*. [*The Harrowing of Hell*.]
1255. Ulrich von Lichtenstein (ca. 1200-76), *Frauendienst*. Berthold von Holle.
1257. Ulrich von Lichtenstein, *Das Frauenbuch*.
- ca. 1260. Konrad von Würzburg's early poems (*Alexius*, *Der Welt Lohn*, *Die goldene Schmiede*). Religious prose: David von Augsburg (died 1272), Berthold von Regensburg (ca. 1220-72). *Der Schwabenspiegel*.
1268. Death of Konradin, the last Hohenstaufen. 1270. The Seventh and last Crusade.
- ca. 1265-ca. 1275. Konrad von Würzburg's *Herzemaere* and *Engelhart*. 'Der Pleier.' *Der jüngere Titulrel*. *Alpharts Tod*. 'Der Marner.' Heinrich von Meissen ('Frauenlob') (ca. 1250-1318). [Roger Bacon. Rutebeuf. 1265. Dante born.]
- 1273-92. Rudolf of Hapsburg.
- ca. 1277. Konrad von Würzburg's *Partenopier*. [J. de Meung, continuation of the *Roman de la Rose*.]
- ca. 1280. *Lohengrin*. Konrad von Würzburg's *Trojanischer Krieg*. Ulrich von Eschenbach. *Didrichs Flucht*. *Die Rabenschlacht*.
- ca. 1285. Seifried Helbling. [*Havelok*. *King Horn*. *Sir Tristrem*.]
1287. Konrad von Würzburg's death.
- ca. 1300. Hugo von Trimberg, *Der Renner*. Heinrich von Freiberg. *Der Wartburgkrieg*. Johannes Hadlaub. Heinzlein von Konstanz, *Die Minnelchre*. [*Cursor Mundi*.]
1327. Death of Meister Eckhart. [1321. Death of Dante.]
- ca. 1335. Wisse and Colin, *Parzival*. [Petrarch and Laura. Rolle of Hampole. L. Minot. Manning of Brunne.]
- ca. 1340. Hadamar von Laber, *Die Jagd*. [*The Tale of Gamelyn*. Michel's *Ayenbite of Inwyrt*.]

## TRANSITION PERIOD

(ca. 1350-1500).

1348. Founding of the University of Prague.
1349. Ulrich von Boner, *Der Edelstein*. [ca. 1350. Boccaccio's *Decameron*. Revival of alliterative poetry in England.]

- 1350-1350. The flourishing-period of the German Volkslied.
- ca. 1350. Heinrich Seuse (ca. 1295-1366). Johannes Tauler (ca. 1300-61). [*Sir Gawain and the Grene Knight*. 1362 ff. *Piers Plowman*. ca. 1360-1400. Froissart's *Chroniques*.]
- ca. 1375. West Flemish version of *Reinke Vos*. Peter Suchenwirt. [1374. Petrarch dies. 1376. Barbour's *Bruce*.]
- 1386-88. Historical ballads on the Battle of Semper. [1387-98. Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.]
- Beginning of 15th Century. Hugo von Montfort (1357-1423). Oswald von Wolkenstein (ca. 1367-1445). Heinrich von Wittenweiler, *Der Ring*. [John Lydgate.]
- ca. 1450. The Invention of Printing. [1455-71. Wars of the Roses.]
- ca. 1450-ca. 1460. Hans Rosenplüt (ca. 1427-60). Michael Beheim (1416-ca. 1480). Muskatblut. Heinrich von Laufenberg (died 1460). [Charles d'Orléans (ca. 1415-65). F. Villon.]
1453. Hermann von Sachsenheim, *Die Möhrin*.
- 1459-1519. Maximilian I., 'the last of the knights.'
1466. The first German Bible printed at Strassburg.
1470. Wimpfeling's *Stylpho*. [ca. 1470. *Maître Patelin*.]
1472. The *Dresdener Heldenbuch*. Albrecht von Eyb. [1475. *The Babees' Book*.]
- ca. 1475. *Der Pfaffe von Kalenberg*.
- ca. 1480. Ulrich Füetrer, *Buch der Abenteuer*. Theodor Schernberg, *Spiel von Frau Jutten*.
1483. Eulenspiegel. Martin Luther born. [Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, publ. 1485.]
1494. Sebastian Brant, *Das Narrenschiff*. Hans Sachs born. [1492. Columbus discovers America.]
1497. Reuchlin's *Henno*.
1498. *Reinke de Vos*. [*Lancelot of the Laik*.]

## THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

- ca. 1500. Johann Geiler of Kaisersberg (1445-1510). [Jean Marot. John Skelton.]
1505. Wimpfeling, *Deutsche Geschichte*. 1506. Reuchlin, *Hebrew Grammar*.
1508. Luther goes to Wittenberg.
- 1509-13. Erasmus in England. 1509. Erasmus, *Enchiridion militis christiani*, *Enconium Moriae*. [*The Ship of Fools*.]
- ca. 1510. Early Nürnberg Fastnachtsspiele (Hans Folz).
1512. Maximilian I., *Der Weisskönig*. Th. Murner, *Die Narrenbeschwörung*. [Gringoire, *Le Jeu du Prince des Sots*.]

1515. *Eulenspiegel* printed at Strassburg. 1515-17. *Epistolæ obscurorum virorum*.
1516. Pamphilus Gengenbach, *Die Gouchmat*. [Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*. More's *Utopia*. Skelton's *Magnificence*.]
1517. Luther, *Thesen wider den Ablass*. Maximilian I., *Teuerdank*. Gengenbach, *Der Nollhart*. Hans Sachs's earliest Fastnachts-spiele.
- 1519-55. Charles V. [1509-47. Henry VIII. in England.]
1519. Th. Murner, *Die Geuchmat*. [Skelton's *Colyn Clout*.]
1520. Luther, *An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation, De captivitate babilonica ecclesiæ, Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen*.
1521. Ulrich von Hutten, *Gesprächbüchlein*.
1522. Luther's translation of the *New Testament* published. N. Manuel, *Vom Papst und seiner Priëstschafft*. Th. Murner, *Der grosse lutherische Narr*. J. Pauli, *Schimpf und Ernst*.
1523. Hans Sachs, *Die wiltembergische Nachtigall*. Hutten's death.
1524. Luther's *Geistliche Lieder*. Melancthon, *Epitome doctrinæ christianæ*.
1525. The Peasants' War. N. Manuel, *Der Ablasskrämer*. [Tindale's *New Testament*.]
1527. Burkard Waldis, *Parabell vum vorlorn Sohn*.
1528. Luther's hymn, *Eine feste Burg ist unser Gott* in the Wittenberg *Gesangbuch*. N. Manuel, *Von der Messe Krankheit*. Death of Albrecht Dürer. [Castiglione, *Il Cortegiano*.]
1530. Luther's *Fabeln*.
1532. Sixt Birck, *Susanna*. [1532-64. Rabelais, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. 1532. Macchiavelli, *Il Principe* published (written 1513).]
1533. Hans Sachs's first Biblical dramas. [Death of Ariosto.]
1534. Luther's *Bible* completed. Erasmus Alberus, *Fabeln*.
1535. P. Rebhun, *Susanna*. [First complete English *Bible* (Coverdale).]
1538. P. Rebhun, *Die Hochzeit zu Cana*. Naogeorgus, *Pammachius*.
1539. J. Wickram, *Ritter Galmy aus Schottland*.
1540. Naogeorgus, *Mercator*.
1542. E. Alberus, *Der Barfüsser Mönch Eulenspiegel und Alcoran*.
- 1545-63. The Council of Trent. 1544-45. Cl. Marot's *Psaumes*.
1546. Luther's death.
1548. Burkard Waldis, *Esopus*. [ca. 1548. Bale's *Kyng Johan*. 1549-60. La Pléiade.]
1549. F. Dedekind, *Grobianus*. [Joachim du Bellay, *Défense et Illustration de la langue française*.]
1550. E. Alberus, *Buch von der Tugend und Weisheit*. J. Wickram,

*Tobias.* Hans Sachs, *Der fahrende Schüler im Paradies.*  
*Histori Peter Lewen.* [Ronsard, *Odes.*]

1551. K. Scheidt, Translation of *Grobianus.* Hans Sachs, *Das heisse Eisen.*
1552. J. Pauli, *Schimpf und Ernst.* Hans Sachs, *Der Bauer im Fegfeuer.* [Jodelle, *Cléopâtre.* Grévin, *La Mort de César.*  
 1553. Death of Rabelais.]
1554. J. Wickram, *Der jungen Knaben Spiegel.* [Bandello's *Novelle*, I.-III. *Lazarillo de Tormes.*]
1555. J. Wickram, *Das Rollwagenbüchlein.*
1556. J. Wickram, *Der irrende Pilger.* J. Frey, *Gartengesellschaft.*
1557. J. Wickram, *Der Goldfaden.* M. Montanus, *Der Wegkürzer.*  
 Hans Sachs, *Der hörnen Seifrit.* [Tottel's *Miscellany.*]
- 1558-1603. [Queen Elizabeth in England.]
1559. M. Lindener, *Das Rastbüchlein.* Hans Sachs, *Collected Works*, vol. i. [Margaret of Navarre, *Heptameron* (1558-59).]
1559. V. Schumann, *Das Nachtbüchlein.* [*A Mirror for Magistrates.* 1561. Scaliger's *Poetica.* *Gorboduc.*]
1563. H. W. Kirchhoff, *Wendunmut.* [1564. Shakespeare born. Galileo born.]
1566. Luther's *Tischreden.* [Gascoigne's *Supposes* and *Jocasta.* Baif, *Antigone.*]
1569. G. Buchanan's *Jephthes* performed in Strassburg. [1568-80. R. Garnier, *Tragédies.* 1569-94. *Amadis de Gaula.*]
1570. Fischart's polemical writings on behalf of protestantism. [R. Ascham's *Scholemaster.*]
1572. Fischart, *Aller Praktik Grossmutter.* P. Schede, Translation of Marot's *Psalms.* [Ronsard, *Franciade.* The Massacre of St Bartholomew.]
1573. Fischart, *Flöh Hatz, Weiber Tratz.*
1575. Fischart, *Affenteurlich naupengeheurliche Geschichtklitterung.* Birth of Jakob Böhme. [Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* finished.]
1576. Fischart, *Das glückhafte Schiff.* Frischlin, *Rebecca.* Hans Sachs dies.
1577. Fischart, *Pedagrammisch Trostbüchlein.* Frischlin, *Susanna.*
1578. Fischart, *Ehezuchtbüchlein.* Frischlin, *Priscianus vapulars.* Joh. Clajus, *Grammaticæ Germanicæ linguæ.* [J. Lyly, *Euphues.*]
1579. Fischart, *Der Bienenkorb.* Frischlin, *Hildegardis magna; Frau Wendelgard.* [Du Bartas, *La première Semaine.* Gosson, *The Schoole of Abuse.*]
1580. Fischart, *Das Jesuiterhüttlein.* Frischlin, *Phasma.* [Sid-

- ney's *Arcadia* begun. Montaigne's *Essais*. Death of Camoens.]
1584. Frischlin, *Julius Cæsar Redivivus*.
1585. B. Ringwaldt, *Die lauter Wahrheit*. [Death of Ronsard.]
1587. *Historia von D. Johann Fausten*. [Brantôme. Execution of Mary Stuart.]
1588. B. Ringwaldt, *Der treue Eckart*. [Th. Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy*. Marlowe, *Dr Faustus*. 1590. Spenser, *The Faery Queene*, I.-III.]
- ca. 1586-ca. 1666. 'Englische Komödianten' in Germany.
- 1593-94. Duke Heinrich Julius of Brunswick's dramas. [Shakespeare's beginnings. 1594. *La Satire Menippée*.]
1595. G. Rollenhagen, *Die Froschmäuseler*. [Daniel, *The Civil Wars*. Spenser, *The Faery Queene*, IV.-VI. Tasso's death.]
1598. Martin Opitz born. [Bacon's *Essays*. Chapman's *Iliad*. The Edict of Nantes.]
1599. G. R. Widmann's *Faustbuch*. [Death of Spenser. Erection of Globe Theatre. Ben Jonson, *Every man out of his Humour*. 1600. Shakespeare's *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, *Merchant of Venice*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *Henry V.*]

### THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

- Beginning of the seventeenth century. [Shakespeare's greatest dramas. Ben Jonson. Beaumont and Fletcher. Bacon's *Advancement of Learning* (1605). Cervantes's *Don Quixote* (1605-15). Birth of Corneille (1606). Birth of Milton (1608).]
1612. J. Böhme, *Aurora, oder Morgenröte im Aufgang*. [The *Vocabulario* of the Accademia della Crusca. D'Urfé's *L'Astrée* (1610-19).]
1616. Andreas Gryphius born. [Death of Shakespeare and Cervantes.]
1617. M. Opitz, *Aristarchus*. Founding of the 'Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft.'
- 1618-48. The Thirty Years' War.
1618. G. Weckherlin, *Oden und Gesänge*. J. Ayre, *Opus Theatricum*.
- 1619-20. Opitz in Heidelberg.
1620. *Englische Komödien und Tragödien*. Opitz in Holland. [Bacon's *Novum Organum*. 1621. Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*. Barclay's *Argenis*. 1622. Birth of Molière.]
1624. Opitz, *Teutsche Poemata* (edited by J. W. Zingref). Opitz, *Buch von der deutschen Poeterei*.



1626. Opitz's translation of Barclay's *Argenis*. 1625. *Don Quixote* partially translated into German.
1627. Opitz's translation of Rinuccini's *Dafne* (first Italian opera in Germany). 1629. Opitz's translation of Sidney's *Arcadia*.
1630. *Liebeskampf, oder zweiter Teil der englischen Komödien und Tragödien*. Opitz, *Hercine*.
1633. Opitz's *Trostgedichte in Widerwärtigkeit des Krieges*. [1632. Prynne's *Histriomastix*. 1634. Milton's *Comus*.]
1638. Logau's *Erstes Hundert deutscher Reimsprüche*. [1636. Corneille's *Le Cid*.]
1639. Opitz's death. Simon Dach professor in Königsberg.
- 1640-1688. Friedrich Wilhelm, der Grosse Kurfürst.
- ca. 1640. H. M. Moscherosch, *Gesichte Philanders von Sittewald*.
1640. Death of Fleming. [1642. Closing of the theatres in England. 1642-43. Corneille, *Horace*, *Cinna*.]
1643. Ph. Zesen's 'Teutschgesinnte Genossenschaft.' J. Balde, *Carmina lyrica*.
1644. 'Der gekrönte Blumenorden' ('Pegnitzschäfer') founded. [Corneille, *Le Menteur*. Milton, *Areopagitica*.]
1645. Ph. Zesen, *Die adriatische Rosemund*.
1646. P. Fleming, *Teutsche Poemata* published. Leibniz born.
- 1647-53. G. P. Harsdörffer, *Der poetische Trichter*. [1647. Rotrou, *Venceslas*.]
1648. The Peace of Westphalia. P. Gerhardt, earliest hymns.
1649. F. von Spee, *Trutznachtigall*. [Mlle. de Scudéry, *Cyrus*. 1649-59. The Commonwealth in England.]
1650. A. Gryphius, *Leo Armenius* (written 1646).
1652. J. Lauremberg, *Scherzgedichte*. [1651. Scarron, *Roman comique*. Hobbes, *Leviathan*.]
1654. F. von Logau, *Deutsche Sinngedichte*. [Vondel, *Lucifer*.]
1656. J. B. Schupp, *Katechismuspredigt*. [Mlle. de Scudéry, *Clélie*.]
1657. Angelus Silesius, *Heilige Seelenlust* and *Der cherubinische Wandersmann* (2nd edition, 1674). A. Gryphius, *Katharina von Georgien*, *Cardenio und Celinde*, *Carolus Stuardus* (written 1649). [D'Aubigné, *Le Pratique du Théâtre*.]
1658. J. Rist's 'Elbschwanenorden.'
- 1659-60. A. H. Bucholtz, *Herkules und Valiska*. The novels of E. W. Happel. [1659. Molière, *Les précieuses ridicules*.]
1660. A. Gryphius, *Die Dornrose* performed. [The Restoration in England. Dryden, *Astræa redux*.]
1661. D. K. von Lohenstein, *Clcopatra*. 1662. Molière, *L'école des femmes*.
1663. A. Gryphius, *Peter Squentz* and *Horribilicribrifax* (both written

- 1647-50). Schottelius, *Die deutsche Hauptsprache*. [1663-78 S. Butler, *Hudibras*.]
1664. J. Rachel, *Satirische Gedichte*. Death of Gryphius.
1665. Lohenstein, *Agrippina*. [Larochevoucauld, *Maximes*. 1606, Molière, *Le Misanthrope*. Furetière, *Le Roman bourgeois*. Dryden, *Essay of Dramatic Poesie*.]
1667. P. Gerhardt, *Geistliche Andachten*. [Milton's *Paradise Lost*.]
1668. C. Weise, *Überflüssige Gedanken der grünen Jugend*.
1669. J. J. C. von Grimmelshausen, *Simplicissimus*; *Die Landsknechtin Courasche*. Anton Ulrich of Brunswick, *Aramena* (1669-73). [Dryden, *The Conquest of Granada*. Molière, *Le Tartuffe*. Racine, *Britannicus*.]
1670. *Schaubühne der englischen und französischen Komödianten*. Grimmelshausen, *Der seltsame Springinsfeld*. [Pascal, *Pensées*.]
1672. C. Weise, *Die drei ärgsten Erznarren*. Grimmelshausen, *Das wunderbarliche Vogelnest*. [Molière, *Les femmes savantes*.]
1673. C. Weise, *Die drei klügsten Leute*. [W. Wycherley, *The Country Wife*. 1674. Boileau, *L'Art poétique*. Death of Milton.]
1675. Ph. Spener, *Desideria pia*. [1676. Dryden, *Aureng-Zebe*. Otway, *Don Carlos*. Wycherley, *The Plaindealer*.]
- ca. 1675-ca. 1700. Pietistic religious poets: Ph. Spener, J. Neander, G. Tersteegen, N. L. von Zinzendorf.
1677. Anton Ulrich of Brunswick, *Die römische Oktavia*. [Racine's *Phèdre*. N. Lee, *The Rival Queens*.]
1678. C. Weise, rector in Zittau. Hofmannswaldau's translation of Guarini's *Pastor fido*. 1678-1738. German opera in Hamburg. [1678. Lafontaine's *Fables*. Dryden, *All for Love*. 1678-84. Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*.]
1679. C. Weise, *Der bürgerliche Machiavell*. J. Neander, *Bundeslieder und Dankpsalmen*. Ph. von Zesen, *Sinsson*. [Th. Otway, *The Orphan*.]
1680. Hofmannswaldau, *Heldenbriefe*. D. K. von Lohenstein, *Sophonisba*. Abraham a Santa Clara, *Merk's Wien!* and *Auf, auf, ihr Christen!* [Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel*. N. Lee, *Theodosius*.]
1682. The *Acta Eruditorum* begin to appear at Leipzig. C. Weise, *Masaniello*. [Bunyan, *The Holy War*. Th. Otway, *Venice Preserv'd*.]
1686. Abraham a Santa Clara, *Judas der Erscheim*. [Dryden, *The Hind and the Panther*.]
- 1687-88. Ch. Thomasius lectures in German at the University of

- Leipzig. 1688-89. Thomasius, *Scherz- und ernsthafte Gedanken*.
1688. A. von Ziegler, *Die asiatische Banise*. [La Bruyère, *Caractères*. 1688-97. Perrault, *Parallèles*.]
- 1689-90. Lohenstein, *Arminius und Thusnelda*. [1689. Racine, *Esther*. 1691. *Athalie*. 1690. Dryden, *Don Sebastian*. J. Locke, *Essay concerning Human Understanding*.]
1692. A. Francke in Halle. [1698. Congreve, *The Old Bachelor*, *The Double Dealer*.]
1694. Founding of the University of Halle.
1695. B. Neukirch, *Herrn von Hofmannswaldau und anderer Deutschen auserlesene Gedichte*.
1696. C. Reuter, *Schelmuffsky*. [Regnard, *Le Joueur*.]
1697. C. Wernigke, *Epigrammata*. Leibniz, *Unvorgreifliche Gedanken*. [Bayle, *Dictionnaire*. J. Vanbrugh, *The Relapse*. 1699. Fénelon, *Télémaque*.]

## THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

1700. Founding of the Berlin Academy. R. von Canitz, *Nebenstunden unterschiedener Gedichte*. [Death of Dryden. Congreve, *The Way of the World*.]
- 1701-13. Friedrich I. of Prussia. 1705-11. Joseph I. of Austria. [1697-1718. Charles XII. of Sweden. 1701-13. War of the Spanish Succession. 1702-14. Queen Anne.]
1705. C. Weise, *Komödie von der bösen Katharina*. [1704. Swift, *The Tale of a Tub*. I. Newton, *Optics*. 1707. Le Sage, *Le Diable boiteux*. G. Farquhar, *The Beaux' Stratagem*.]
1710. Leibniz, *Essais de Théodicée*. [1709-11. *The Tatler*. 1711-15. *The Spectator*. 1711. Pope, *Essay on Criticism*. 1712. J. J. Rousseau born.]
1711. J. von Besser, *Schriften*.
1713. *Der Vernünftler* (Hamburg). [The Guardian. Addison, *Cato*.]
- 1713-40. Friedrich Wilhelm of Prussia. [1714-27. George I. in England.]
1715. B. H. Brockes, *Bethlemitischer Kindermord*. [1715-35. Le Sage, *Gil Blas*.]
1719. Death of Leibniz. [1718. Voltaire, *Oedipe*. 1719. Dubos, *Réflexions sur la poésie et la peinture*. Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*.]
1720. Ch. Wolff, *Vernünfftige Gedanken von Gott, der Welt und der Seele des Menschen*.
1721. Bodmer and Breitinger, *Diskurse der Maler* (1721-23). Brockes,

*Irdisches Vergnügen in Gott* (vol. ix., 1748). [Montesquieu, *Lettres persanes*.]

1724. J. C. Günther, *Gedichte*. Gottsched comes to Leipzig. Klopstock and Kant born. 1724-26. *Der Patriot*. [1723. Voltaire, *Henriade*. 1723-25. L. Holberg's comedies.]
- 1725-27. Gottsched, *Die vernünftigen Tadelrinnen* and *Der Biedermann*. 1725. [G. B. Vico, *La nuova scienza*. 1726. Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*. 1726-30. J. Thomson, *The Seasons*. 1728. Pope, *The Dunciad*.]
1729. F. von Hagedorn, *Versuch einiger Gedichte*. Lessing born.
1730. Gottsched, *Kritische Dichtkunst*. [Voltaire, *Brutus*.]
- 1731-43. J. G. Schnabel, *Die Insel Felsenburg*. [1731. G. Lillo, *The Merchant of London*. 1731-41. Marivaux, *Marianne*.]
1732. A. von Haller, *Versuch schweizerischer Gedichte*. Bodmer, translation of *Paradise Lost*. Gottsched, *Der sterbende Cato*. [Voltaire, *Zaire*. Destouches, *Le Glorieux*.]
- 1732-44. Gottsched, *Beiträge zur kritischen Historie*. 1733. Wieland born.
1734. Haller, *Die Alpen*. [Voltaire, *Lettres anglaises*.]
- 1735-40. A. G. Baumgarten in Halle. [1735. Prévost, *Manon Lescaut*.]
1738. Hagedorn, *Fabeln und Erzählungen*.
1739. C. L. Liscow, *Satirische und ernsthafte Schriften*. [D. Hume, *Treatise on Human Nature*.]
- 1740-86. Frederick the Great. 1740-80. Maria Theresa. [1727-60. George II. in England.]
1740. Conflict between Gottsched and Bodmer and Breiünger. Breiünger, *Kritische Dichtkunst* and *Kritische Abhandlung von den Gleichnissen*. Bodmer, *Kritische Abhandlung von dem Wunderbaren*. 1740-45. Gottsched, *Deutsche Schaubühne*. [1740. Richardson, *Pamela*.]
1741. K. W. von Borck, translation of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. [G. F. Händel, *The Messiah*. Nivelle de la Chaussée, *Mélanide*.]
1742. Hagedorn, *Oden und Lieder*. [Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*.]
1743. J. E. Schlegel, *Hermann*. [Young, *Night Thoughts*.]
1744. F. W. Zachariä, *Der Renommist*. 1744-45. J. W. Gleim, *Scherzhafte Lieder*. Herder born. 1744-48. Bremer *Beiträge*. [1744. Death of Pope.]
1745. Pyra and Lange, *Freundschaftliche Lieder* (written 1737). [Voltaire, *Mérope*. Laplace, *Le théâtre anglais*. 1745-48.]
- 1746-48. Lessing in Leipzig. C. F. Gellert, *Fabeln und Erzählungen*.
1747. J. E. Schlegel, *Canut*; *Die stumme Schönheit*. 1747-48. Gellert, *Die schwedische Gräfin*. [Voltaire, *Zadig*.]

1748. Gottsched, *Deutsche Sprachkunst*. J. E. Schlegel, *Der Triumph der guten Frauen*. Klopstock, *Der Messias*, i.-iii. Lessing, *Der junge Gelehrte*. [Richardson, *Clarissa Harlowe*. Smollett, *Roderick Random*. Montesquieu, *Esprit des Lois*.]
- 1748-55. Lessing in Berlin. 1750-52. Voltaire in Berlin.
1749. Ch. E. von Kleist, *Der Frühling*. J. P. Uz, *Lyrische Gedichte*. Goethe born. [Fielding, *Tom Jones*. Voltaire, *Nanine*.]
1750. A. G. Baumgarten, *Aesthetica* (1750-58). Hagedorn, *Moralische Gedichte*. Bodmer, *Noah*. Klopstock in Zürich. Lessing, *Beiträge zur Historie und Aufnahme des Theaters*. [Young, *Conjectures on Original Composition*. Th. Gray, *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*.]
1751. Klopstock, *Der Messias* (vol. i.). Lessing, *Kleinigkeiten*. [Voltaire, *Le Siècle de Louis XIV*. Smollett, *Peregrine Pickle*.]
- 1751-55. G. W. Rabener, *Sammlung satirischer Schriften*. 1751-69. Gellert professor in Leipzig. [1751-80. *L'Encyclopédie*.]
1752. Wieland in Zürich; *Die Natur der Dinge*. C. F. Weisse, *Der Teufel ist los!*
- 1753-54. Lessing, *Rettungen*. [1753. Richardson, *Sir Charles Grandison*. E. Moore, *The Gamester*. 1753-58. Voltaire, *Essai sur les mœurs*.]
1754. S. Gessner, *Daphnis*. 1754-58. Lessing, *Theatralische Bibliothek*. [1754-76. *L'Année littéraire*.]
1755. Lessing, *Miss Sara Sampson*. Uz, *Theodicee*. Winkelmann, *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke*. A. G. Kästner, *Vermischte Schriften*. [Johnson, *Dictionary*.]
- 1756-63. The Seven Years' War. 1755-58. Lessing in Leipzig.
1756. Gessner, *Idyllen*. Klopstock, *Der Messias*, vol. ii. Zimmermann, *Betrachtungen über die Einsamkeit*.
1757. Gellert, *Geistliche Oden und Lieder*. Klopstock, *Der Tod Adams*. Gottsched, *Nötiger Vorrat*, vol. i. (vol. ii., 1765). [Diderot, *Le fils naturel*.]
1758. Gleim, *Preussische Kriegslieder von einem Grenadier*. Klopstock, *Geistliche Lieder*. Gessner, *Der Tod Abels*. Wieland, *Lady Johanna Gray*. J. F. von Cronegk, *Codrus*. J. W. von Brawe, *Der Freigeist*. [Voltaire, *Candide*. Diderot, *Le père de famille*.]
- 1758-65. Lessing, *Literaturbriefe*.
1759. Lessing, *Philotas*; *Fabeln*. C. F. Weisse, *Richard III*. Hamann, *Sokratische Denkwürdigkeiten*. Kleist's death. Schiller born. [Burns born. 1759-67. Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*.]
1760. Wieland becomes Kanzleidirektor in Biberach. 1760-65. Lessing in Breslau.

1761. Th. Abbt, *Vom Tod fürs Vaterland*. Wieland, *Araspe und Panthea*. [Rousseau, *La nouvelle Héloïse*.]
- 1762-66. Wieland, translation of Shakespeare. 1762. Gluck, *Orfeo*. [Rousseau, *Émile*, *Le Contrat social*. Macpherson, *Ossian*.]
1763. A. L. Karschin, *Auserlesene Gedichte*.
1764. Klopstock, *Salomo*. Wieland, *Don Sylvio von Rosalba*. Winkelmann, *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums*. Ossian translated. M. von Thümmel, *Wilhelmine*. [Voltaire, *Dictionnaire philosophique*.]
- 1765-68. Goethe in Leipzig. 1765. Th. Abbt, *Vom Verdienste*. [Percy, *Reliques of English Poetry*.]
1766. Lessing, *Laokoon*. 1766-67. Wieland, *Agathon*. H. W. von Gerstenberg, *Gedicht eines Skalden; Briefe über die Merkwürdigkeiten der Literatur* (1766-70). [Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield*.]
1767. Lessing, *Minna von Barnhelm*, *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* (1767-69). Mendelssohn, *Phädon*. Herder, *Fragmente*. [Beaumarchais, *Eugénie*.]
1768. Wieland, *Musarion; Idris und Zenide*. Gerstenberg, *Ugolino*. Goethe, *Die Laune des Verliebten*. [Sterne, *Sentimental Journey*.]
1769. Klopstock, *Der Messias*, vol. iii.; *Hermannsschlacht*. Herder's voyage to France. C. H. von Ayrenhoff, *Der Postzug*.
1770. Lessing becomes librarian in Wolfenbüttel. 1770-71. Herder and Goethe in Strassburg. Hegel born.
1771. Klopstock, *Oden* (first collected edition). 1771-75. M. Claudius, *Der Wandsbecker Bote*.
1772. Klopstock, *David*. Ramler, *Lyrische Gedichte*. M. Denis, *Lieder Sineds des Barden*. Lessing, *Emilia Galotti*. Wieland, *Der goldene Spiegel*. Goethe in Wetzlar. Founding of the 'Gottinger Hain.'
1773. Klopstock, *Der Messias*, vol. iv. (and last). *Von deutscher Art und Kunst*. Goethe, *Göte von Berlichingen*. G. A. Bürger, *Lenore*. C. F. Nicolai, *Sebaldu Nothanker*.
- 1773-89. Wieland, *Der Teutsche Merkur*. 1773-81. Schiller as 'Karlsschüler.'
1774. Klopstock, *Deutsche Gelehrtenrepublik*. Lessing, *Wolfenbüttler Fragmente* (1774-78). Wieland, *Die Abderiten*. Goethe, *Werthers Leiden; Clavigo*. J. M. R. Lenz, *Der Hofmeister*. J. Möser, *Patriotische Phantasien*.
1775. Goethe goes to Weimar. Nicolai, *Freuden des jungen Werthers*. F. M. von Klinger, *Otto*. 1775-78. J. K. Lavater, *Physiognomische Fragmente*. [Beaumarchais, *Le Barbier de Seville*. Sheridan, *The Rivals*.]

1776. Wieland, *Gandalin*. G. C. Lichtenberg, *Briefe aus England* (1776-78). Herder called to Weimar. Goethe, *Stella*. Klinger, *Die Zwillinge*; *Sturmi und Drang*. Leisewitz, *Julius von Tarent*. H. L. Wagner, *Die Kindermörderin*. Maler Müller, *Faust* (1776-78). J. M. Miller, *Siegwart*. Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in Hamburg. The Hofburgtheater in Vienna. [Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*.]
1777. Wieland, *Geron der Adlige*. H. Jung-Stilling, *Jugend*. 1777-79. F. H. Jacobi, *Woldemar*. [Sheridan, *The School for Scandal*.]
1778. Lessing, *Anti-Goeze*; *Ernst und Falk*. Bürger, *Gedichte* (*Der wilde Jäger*). Hippel, *Lebenslaufe* (1778-81). [Death of Voltaire and Rousseau.]
1779. Lessing, *Nathan der Weise*. The brothers Stolberg, *Gedichte*. Gluck, *Iphigénie en Tauride*. The Nationaltheater in Mannheim opened.
1780. Lessing, *Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts*. Wieland, *Oberon*. Frederick the Great, *De la littérature allemande*. O. von Gemmingen, *Der deutsche Hausvater*. J. A. von Töring, *Agnes Bernauerin*.
1781. Death of Lessing. Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. J. H. Voss, translation of the *Odyssey*. Schiller, *Die Räuber*.
1782. Schiller's flight from Stuttgart. 1782-83. L. H. C. Hölty, *Gedichte*. 1782-86. J. K. A. Müllers, *Völkermärchen*. [1782-88. Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.]
1783. Schiller, *Fiesco*. Jean Paul's literary beginnings.
1784. Klopstock, *Hermann und die Fürsten*. K. A. Kortum, *Job-siade*. Voss, *Luise*. Schiller, *Kabale und Liebe*. 1784-91. Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*. [Beaumarchais, *Le Mariage de Figaro*.]
1785. Voss, *Idyllen* (first collected edition). K. Ph. Moritz, *Anton Reiser*. Schiller in Leipzig, *An die Freude*. A. W. Iffland, *Die Jäger*.
1786. Death of Frederick the Great. 1786-88. Goethe's Italian Journey.
1787. Klopstock, *Hermanns Tod*. Schiller, *Don Carlos*. J. J. Heinse, *Ardinghello*. Goethe, *Iphigenie auf Tauris*. F. von Matthisson, *Gedichte*. [St Pierre, *Paul et Virginie*.]
1788. A. Knigge, *Über den Umgang mit Menschen*. Goethe, *Egmont*. Schiller, *Ahfall der Niederlande*. Kant, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*. A. Schopenhauer born.
1789. The Beginnings of the French Revolution. Schiller professor in Jena. Schiller, *Der Geisterseher*; *Die Künstler*. Kotzebue, *Menschenhass und Reue*.

1790. Goethe, *Faust, ein Fragment*; Tasso. Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*.
1791. Schiller, *Geschichte des dreissigjährigen Krieges* (1791-93). J. G. Forster, *Ansichten vom Niederrhein*. Klinger, *Medea*; novels (1791-98). Mozart, *Die Zauberflöte*. Grillparzer born. Goethe takes over the direction of the Weimar theatre (1791-1817). [Volney, *Les Ruines*.]
1793. Schiller, *Über Anmut und Würde*. Richter, *Die unsichtbare Loge*. J. G. von Salis-Seewis, *Gedichte*. Goethe, *Der Bürger-general*.
1794. The friendship of Goethe and Schiller (1794-1805). Goethe, *Reineke Fuchs*. H. Zschokke, *Abällino*. Fichte, *Wissenschaftslehre*.
1795. Goethe, *Römische Elegien*; *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795-96). Schiller, *Die Horen* (1795-97); *Musenalmanach* (1796-99); *Briefe über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen*; *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* (1795-96). J. P. F. Richter, *Hesperus*. J. L. Tieck, *William Lovell* (1795-97). M. G. Lewis, *The Monk*.]
1796. Goethe and Schiller, *Xenien*. Richter, *Quintus Fixlein*; *Siebenkäs* (1796-97). [Coleridge, *Poems*.]
1797. Goethe, *Hermann und Dorothea*. Goethe and Schiller, *Ballads* (*Balladenalmanach*, 1798). Tieck, *Der gestiefelte Kater*. Wackenroder and Tieck, *Herzensergiessungen*. F. Hölderlin, *Hyperion* (1797-99). A. W. Schlegel, translation of Shakespeare (1797-1801, 1810). F. Schlegel, *Die Griechen und Römer*.
1798. Goethe, *Die Propyläen* (1798-1800). Schiller, *Wallensteins Lager*. *Das Athenäum* (1798-1800). Tieck and Wackenroder, *Franz Sternbald*. F. W. J. von Schelling, *Von der Weltseele*. [Coleridge and Wordsworth in Germany, *Lyrical Ballads*.]
1799. Schiller, *Die Piccolomini*; *Wallensteins Tod*; *Das Lied von der Glocke*. W. von Humboldt, *Ästhetische Versuche*. Tieck, *Romantische Dichtungen* (1799-1800). F. Schlegel, *Lucinde*. Schleiermacher, *Reden über die Religion*. Schiller settles in Weimar.
1800. Wieland, *Aristipp* (1800-2). Schiller, *Maria Stuart*. Richter, *Titan* (1800-3). Novalis, *Hymnen an die Nacht*. Schleiermacher, *Monologen*. [Scott's translation of Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen*.]

## THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

1801. Schiller, *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*. C. A. Tiedge, *Urania*. C. M. Brentano, *Godwi*. Death of Novalis. Hegel in Jena (1801-6). H. J. von Collin, *Regulus*. [Chateaubriand, *Atala*.]



1802. F. Schlegel, *Alarkos*. Novalis, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*. L. A. von Arnim, *Hollins Liebelben*. [Chateaubriand, *Génie du Christianisme*.]
1803. Schiller, *Die Braut von Messina*. Goethe, *Die natürliche Tochter*. Death of Klopstock and Herder. J. G. Seume, *Spaziergang nach Syrakuse*. J. P. Hebel, *Alemannische Gedichte*. Z. Werner, *Die Söhne des Thales* (1803). H. von Kleist, *Die Familie Schroffenstein*.
1804. Schiller, *Wilhelm Tell*. Richter, *Flegeljahre* (1804-5). Tieck, *Kaiser Oktavianus*. A. W. Schlegel joins Madame de Staël. Tieck goes to Rome. *Der grüne Almanach* (1804-6). [Chateaubriand, *René*.]
1805. Schiller's death. Herder, *Der Cid*. Goethe, *Winkelmann*. Brentano and Arnim in Heidelberg. *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, vol. i. Beethoven, *Fidelio*.
1806. The Battle of Jena. E. M. Arndt, *Der Geist der Zeit* (1806-18). Z. Werner, *Das Kreuz an der Ostsee*.
1807. Richter, *Levana*. Z. Werner, *Martin Luther*. Kleist, *Amphytrion*. Görres, *Die deutschen Volksbücher*. Hegel, *Phenomenologie des Geistes*. Fichte, *Reden an die deutsche Nation* (1807-8). [Mad. de Staël, *Corinne*. Wordsworth, *Poems*.]
1808. Goethe, *Faust, Erster Teil*. Goethe's interview with Napoleon at Erfurt. *Die Zeitung für Einsiedler*, Kleist, *Penthesilea*; *Der zerbrochene Krug*; *Die Hermannusschlacht* (publ. 1821). La Motte Fouqué, *Sigurd der Schlangentöter*. F. Schlegel, *Die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier*. [Scott, *Marmion*.]
1809. Goethe, *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*. A. W. Schlegel, *Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Literatur* (1809-11). Arnim und Brentano in Berlin. Arnim, *Gräfin Dolores*. Z. Werner, *Der vierundzwanzigste Februar* (publ. 1815).
1810. Goethe, *Pandora*; *Farbenlehre*. Kleist, *Michael Kohlhaas*; *Käthchen von Heilbronn*; *Der Prinz von Homburg* (publ. 1821).
1811. Goethe, *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (1811-33). Arnim, *Halle und Jerusalem*. Kleist's death. Fouqué, *Undine*. B. G. Niebuhr, *Römische Geschichte* (1811-32). [Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*.]
1812. Tieck, *Phantasmus* (1812-16). The brothers Grimm, *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (1812-15). Arnim, *Isabella von Ägypten*. K. Th. Körner, *Zriny*. A. Müllner, *Der neunundzwanzigste Februar*. [Byron, *Childe Harold*.]
1813. The Battle of Leipzig. Death of Wieland. Hebbel, Ludwig, and Wagner born. Arndt, *Lieder für Teutsche*. Fouqué,

- Der Zauberring.* Müllner, *Die Schuld.* [Shelley, *Queen Mab.*]
1814. Founding of the 'Deutsche Bund.' Körner, *Leier und Schwert.* F. Rückert, *Geharnischte Sonette.* A. von Chamisso, *Peter Schlemihl.* E. T. A. Hoffmann, *Phantasiestücke* (1814-15). [Scott, *Waverley.* Wordsworth, *The Excursion.*]
1815. The Battle of Waterloo. Goethe, *Des Epimenides Erwachen.* Brentano, *Die Gründung Prags.* J. von Eichendorff, *Ahnung und Gegenwart.* Hoffmann, *Die Elixiere des Teufels.* J. L. Uhland, *Gedichte* first collected. [Béranger, *Chansons.*]
1816. Goethe, *Italienische Reise* (1816-17); *Kunst und Altertum* (1816-32). Oehlenschläger, *Correggio.* Uhland, *Vaterländische Gedichte.*
1817. A. W. Schlegel professor in Bonn (1817-45). Arnim, *Die Kronenwächter.* Brentano, *Geschichte vom braven Kasperl.* Hoffmann, *Nachtstücke.* H. Zschokke, *Das Goldmacherdorf.* Mad. de Staël, *De l'Allemagne* published. Grillparzer, *Die Ahnfrau.* [Keats, *Poems.*]
1818. Grillparzer, *Sappho.* E. K. F. Schulze, *Cäcilie and Die besauberte Rose.* Uhland, *Ernst, Herzog in Schwaben.* W. Müller, *Müllerlieder.* [Keats, *Endymion.*]
1819. Goethe, *Der westöstliche Divan.* Hoffmann, *Klein Zaches; Die Serapionsbrüder* (1819-21). Tieck settles in Dresden. J. Grimm, *Deutsche Grammatik* (1819-37). A. Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung.* Assassination of Kotzebue. [Byron, *Don Juan*, I.-II. Shelley, *The Cenci.*]
1820. Grillparzer, *Das goldene Vliess.* [Lamartine, *Méditations.* Scott, *Ivanhoe.*]
1821. Goethe, *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* (1821-29). Tieck, *Novellen* (1821-31). W. Müller, *Gedichte; Lieder der Griechen* (1821-24). Hoffmann von Fallersleben, *Lieder und Romanzen.* K. M. von Weber, *Der Freischütz.* A. von Platen, *Ghaselen.* [De Quincey, *The Opium-eater.* Shelley, *Adonais.*]
1822. F. Rückert, *Östliche Rosen.* H. Heine, *Gedichte* (first collection). [V. Hugo, *Odes.* Vigny, *Poèmes.* Lamb, *Essays of Elia.*]
1823. F. Rückert, *Liebesfrühling.* W. Alexis, *Walladmor* (1823-24). Heine, *Tragödien.* W. Waiblinger, *Lieder der Griechen.* F. Raimund, *Der Barometermacher.* F. L. G. von Raumer, *Geschichte der Hohenstaufen* (1823-25). [V. Hugo, *Han d'Island.*]
1824. H. Zschokke, *Bilder aus der Schweiz* (1824-26). W. Menzel, *Geschichte der Deutschen.* [Death of Byron.]

1825. Platen, *Sonette aus Venedig*. Grillparzer, *König Ottokars Glück und Ende*. [Carlyle, *Life of Schiller*. Manzoni, *I Promessi Sposi*.]
1826. Tieck, *Der Aufruhr in den Cevennen*. Eichendorff, *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts*. W. Hauff, *Lichtenstein*. Platen, *Die verhängnisvolle Gabel*. Heine, *Harzreise*. J. Kerner, *Gedichte*. Raimund, *Der Bauer als Millionär*. [A. de Vigny, *Cinq-Mars*.]
1827. Heine, *Buch der Lieder*; *Reisebilder*, II. Heine's visit to England. K. Spindler, *Der Jude*. Zedlitz, *Totenkränze*. [V. Hugo, *Cronwell*. Bulwer, *Pelham*.]
1828. Platen, *Gedichte*. Grillparzer, *Ein treuer Diener seines Herrn*. Raimund, *Der Alpenkönig und der Menschenfeind*. Immermann, *Das Trauerspiel in Tirol*. G. Schwab, *Gedichte* (1828-29). Death of Duke Karl August of Weimar.
1829. Platen, *Der romantische Oedipus*. Grabbe, *Don Juan und Faust*. M. Beer, *Struensee*. J. Kerner, *Die Seherin von Prevorst*. [V. Hugo, *Orientales*. A. Dumas, *Henri III*. Balzac, *Comédie humaine* (1829-50).]
1830. [The July Revolution in Paris.] Chamisso, *Frauenliebe und Leben*. Platen, *Polenlieder* (1830-33). L. Börne, *Briefe aus Paris* (1830-33). A. Grün, *Blätter der Liebe*; *Der letzte Ritter*. [V. Hugo, *Hernani*. Tennyson, *Poems*.]
1831. Chamisso, *Gedichte* (first collected). Grillparzer, *Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen*. Grabbe, *Napoleon*. A. Grün, *Spaziergänge eines Wiener Poeten*. Heine settles in Paris. [V. Hugo, *Notre-Dame de Paris*; *Marion Delorme*. Stendhal, *Le Rouge et le Noir*.]
1832. The death of Goethe. Goethe, *Faust*, *Zweiter Teil*. Immermann, *Merlin*. Rückert, *Haus- und Jahreslieder*. E. Mörike, *Maler Nolten*. W. Alexis, *Cabanis*. N. Lenau, *Gedichte* (first collected).
1833. Raimund, *Der Verschwender*. H. Laube, *Das junge Europa* (1833-37). J. Nestroy, *Lumpacivagabundus*. F. Freiligrath, *Gedichte* (first collection). Heine, *Französische Zustände*. [G. Sand, *Lélia*. Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*.]
1834. Eichendorff, *Dichter und ihre Gesellen*. Rückert, *Gedichte* (1834-38). L. Wienbarg, *As hetische Feldzüge*. Heine, *Der Salon* (1834-40). Grillparzer, *Der Traum ein Leben*. C. Sealsfield, *Der Virey und die Aristokraten*. L. von Ranke, *Die römischen Päpste* (1834-36). [Lamennais, *Paroles d'un croyant*. Bulwer, *The Last Days of Pompeii*.]
1835. The decree against 'Jungdeutschland.' B. von Arnim, *Goethes Briefwechsel mit einem Kind*. Grillparzer, *Tristia ex Ponto*.

- K. Gutzkow, *Wally die Zweiflerin*. Th. Mundt, *Madonna*. D. F. Strauss, *Das Leben Jesu*. G. G. Gervinus, *Geschichte der deutschen Nationalliteratur*.
1836. Tieck, *Der junge Tischlermeister*. Rückert, *Weisheit der Brahmanen* (1836-39). Immermann, *Die Epigonen*. Lenau, *Faust*. [Musset, *Confessions d'un enfant du siècle*. Lamartine, *Jocelyn*. Dickens, *Pickwick Papers*. Gogol, *The Revisor*.]
1837. [Accession of Queen Victoria in England.], Eichendorff, *Gedichte* (first collected). Lenau, *Savonarola*. B. Auerbach, *Spinoza*. [G. Sand, *Mauprat*. Carlyle, *The French Revolution*.]
1838. Grillparzer, *Weh' dem, der lügt*. Mörike, *Gedichte* (first collected). Immermann, *Münchhausen*. A. von Droste-Hülshoff, *Gedichte*. K. Beck, *Gepanzerte Lieder*. [V. Hugo, *Ruy Blas*.]
1839. Ranke, *Deutsche Geschichte* (1830-47). [Stendhal, *La Chartreuse de Parme*.]
1840. Accession of Friedrich Wilhelm IV. of Prussia. Tieck, *Vittoria Accorombona*. Heine, *Ludwig Börne*. Immermann, *Düsseldorfer Anfänge*. Hoffmann von Fallersleben, *Unpolitische Lieder* (1840-41). W. Alexis, *Der Roland von Berlin*. E. Geibel, *Gedichte*. C. F. Hebbel, *Judith*. [Dickens, *Oliver Twist*. Browning, *Sordello*. Scribe, *Le verre d'eau*. Mérimée, *Colomba*.]
1841. The political lyric (N. Becker, R. E. Prutz, M. Schneckenburg, F. Freiligrath, G. Herwegh). G. Herwegh, *Gedichte eines Lebendigen* (1841-44). E. Geibel, *Zeitstimmen*. J. Gotthelf, *Uli der Knecht*. Feuerbach, *Das Wesen des Christentums*. [A. Dumas, *Monte Cristo* (1841-45). Carlyle, *On Heroes*. Emerson, *Essays*.]
1842. Lenau, *Die Albiger*. W. Alexis, *Der falsche Waldemar*. F. Dingelstedt, *Lieder eines kosmopolitischen Nachtwächters*. M. von Strachwitz, *Lieder eines Erwachenden*. F. Halm, *Der Sohn der Wildnis*. Hebbel, *Gedichte* (1842, 1848, 1857). R. Wagner, *Rienzi*. [G. Sand, *Consuelo*. Gogol, *Dead Souls*. Macaulay, *Lays of Ancient Rome*.]
1843. Gutzkow, *Zopf und Schwert*. Hebbel, *Genoveva*. Auerbach, *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* (1843-54). E. Geibel, *Volkslieder und Romanzen der Spanier*. R. Wagner, *Der fliegende Holländer*. [Ponsard, *Lucrèce*.]
1844. Heine, *Neue Gedichte; Deutschland*. Freiligrath, *Ein Glaubensbekenntnis*. A. Stifter, *Studien*. Hebbel, *Maria Magdalene*. I. Hahn-Hahn, *Aus der Gesellschaft*. F. Th.

- Vischer, *Kritische Gänge*. [A. Dumas, *Les trois Mousquetaires*.]
1845. R. Wagner, *Tannhäuser*. A. von Humboldt, *Kosmos* (1845-58).
1846. Freiligrath, *Ça ira*. W. Alexis, *Die Hosen des Herrn von Bredow*. G. Kinkel, *Otto der Schütz*. [Thackeray, *Vanity Fair* (1846-48). Dickens, *Dombey and Son*. Dostoevski, *Poor Folk*.]
1847. Heine, *Atta Troll*. Eichendorff, *Die neue romantische Poesie in Deutschland*. Gutzkow, *Uriel Acosta*. Laube, *Die Karlsruher*. G. Freytag, *Die Valentine*. Geibel, *Juniuslieder*. [Ch. Brontë, *Jane Eyre*. Mérimée, *Carmen*. Longfellow, *Evangeline*.]
1848. [The March Revolution.] Grillparzer, *Der arme Spielmann*. Freytag, *Graf Waldemar*. Ch. Birch-Pfeiffer, *Dorf und Stadt*. Freytag and Julian Schmidt become editors of the *Grenzboten*. [É. Augier, *L'Aventurière*. Macaulay, *History of England* (1848-61).]
1849. Bettina von Arnim, *Dies Buch gehört dem König*. Freiligrath, *Neue politische und soziale Gedichte*. Gutzkow, *Der Königsleutnant*. O. von Redwitz, *Amaranth*. R. Wagner, *Die Kunst und die Revolution*. [Chateaubriand, *Mémoires d'outre-tombe*. Thackeray, *Pendennis* (1849-50).]
1850. Gutzkow, *Die Ritter vom Geist* (1850-52). Laube becomes director of the Hofburgtheater (1850-67). J. Gotthelf, *Elsi, die seltsame Magd*. G. Keller in Berlin (1850-55). Heibel, *Herodes und Mariamne*. O. Ludwig, *Der Erbforster*. R. Wagner, *Lohengrin*; *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*. R. Schumann, *Genoveva*. P. Heyse, *Francesca da Rimini*. [Dickens, *David Copperfield*. Tennyson, *In Memoriam*. Sainte-Beuve, *Lundis* (1850-69).]
1851. Heine, *Romanzero*. R. Wagner, *Oper und Drama*. Geibel invited to Munich. Freiligrath settles in London. A. von Droste-Hülshoff, *Das geistliche Jahr*. Bodenstedt, *Lieder des Mirza Schaffy*.
1852. Brentano, *Romanzen vom Rosenkranz* published. W. Alexis, *Ruhe ist die erste Bürgerpflicht*. Th. Storm, *Immensee*. Heibel, *Agnes Bernauer*. G. Freytag, *Die Journalisten*. W. Jordan, *Demiurgos* (1852-54). A. Stifter, *Bunte Steine*. K. Groth, *Quickborn*. [V. Hugo, *Châtiments*.]
1853. Wagner, *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (poem completed). O. Ludwig, *Die Makkabäer*. F. Reuter, *Läuschen un Rimels*. [Thackeray, *The Newcomes*.]
1854. Keller, *Der grüne Heinrich* (1854-55). F. Halm, *Der*

- Fechter von Ravenna.* J. W. von Scheffel, *Der Trompeter von Säckingen.* Th. Mommsen, *Römische Geschichte* (1854-56). [Augier, *Le Gendre de M. Poirier.* Thackeray, *Esmond.*]
1855. Freytag, *Soll und Haben.* E. Mörike, *Mozart auf der Reise nach Prag.* P. Heyse, first volume of *Novellen.* L. Büchner, *Kraft und Stoff.* [Longfellow, *Hiawatha.*]
1856. Death of Heine. Laube, *Graf Essex.* Heibel, *Gyges und sein Ring.* O. Ludwig, *Zwischen Himmel und Erde.* A. E. Brachvogel, *Narziss.* Keller, *Die Leute von Seldwyla* (1856-74). W. H. Riehl, *Kulturgeschichtliche Novellen.* H. Hettner, *Literaturgeschichte des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts* (1856-70). [Turgenev, *Rudin.*]
1857. E. Geibel, *Neue Gedichte.* J. V. von Scheffel, *Ekkehard.* A. Stifter, *Der Nachsommer.* R. Hamerling, *Sangesgruss vom Stade des Adria.* W. Raabe, *Chronik der Sperlingsgasse.* [Flaubert, *Madame Bovary.* Thackeray, *The Virginians* (1857-59).]
1858. Gutzkow, *Der Zauberer von Rom.* Geibel, *Brunnhild.* [Tennyson, *Idylls of the King.*]
1859. Heibel, *Mutter und Kind.* Freytag, *Bilder aus der deutschen Vergangenheit* (1859-62). Wagner, *Tristan und Isolde.* [Darwin, *Origin of Species.* G. Eliot, *Adam Bede.* G. Meredith, *Richard Feverel.* V. Hugo, *Légende des Siècles.*]
1860. F. Reuter, *Ut de Franzosentid.* F. Spielhagen, *Problematische Naturen.* J. Burckhardt, *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien.* [Tolstoi, *War and Peace.* G. Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss.* Björnson, *A Happy Boy.*]
1861. Accession of Wilhelm I. King of Prussia. E. Geibel, *Münchener Dichterbuch.* F. Dahn, *Könige der Germanen* (1861-72). [V. Sardou, *Nos Intimes.* Dostoevski, *Memoirs of a Dead House* (1861-62).]
1862. Heibel, *Die Nibelungen.* Reuter, *Ut mine Stromtid* (1862-64). [V. Hugo, *Les Misérables.* Leconte de Lisle, *Poèmes barbares.* Turgenev, *Fathers and Sons.* Flaubert, *Salammô.* H. Ibsen, *Comedy of Love.*]
1863. Death of Heibel. Reuter, *Ut mine Festungstid.* Freytag, *Die Technik des Dramas.* [G. Eliot, *Remola.* Ibsen, *The Pretenders.*]
1864. Freytag, *Die verlorene Handschrift.* G. Ebers, *Eine ägyptische Königstochter.* W. Raabe, *Der Hungerkünstler.* Dingelstedt, Shakespeare's 'Königsdramen' performed in Weimar. K. F. Meyer, *Gedichte.* Performances of the

Meiningen Court Theater (1864-89). [E. and J. de Goncourt, *Renée Mauperin*.]

1865. Laube, *Der deutsche Krieg* (1865-67). Auerbach, *Auf der Höhe*. W. Busch, *Max und Moritz*. Wagner, *Tristan und Isolde*. [Tolstoi, *War and Peace* (1865-69). Taine, *Philosophie de l'art* (1865-69).]
1866. War between Prussia and Austria. Spielhagen, *In Reih' und Glied*. H. Lingg, *Die Völkerwanderung* (1866-68). R. Hamerling, *Ahasver in Rom*. P. Heyse, *Hans Lange*. [Ibsen, *Brand*. Dostoevski, *Crime and Punishment*. Swinburne, *Poems and Ballads*.]
1867. Scheffel, *Gaudeamus*. K. F. Meyer, *Balladen*. K. Marx, *Das Kapital*, vol. i. [Ibsen, *Peer Gynt*. Turgenev, *Smoke*.]
1868. W. Jordan, *Die Nibelunge* (1868-72). M. Greif, *Gedichte*. P. Heyse, *Colberg*. W. Jensen, *Die braune Erica*. Wagner, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. [Dostoevski, *The Idiot*. Browning, *The Ring and the Book* (1868-69).]
1869. Spielhagen, *Hammer und Amboss*. R. Hamerling, *Der König von Sion*. E. von Hartmann, *Philosophie des Unbewussten*. [Flaubert, *L'Éducation sentimentale*.]
1870. The Franco-German War (1870-71). H. Lorm, *Gedichte*. L. Anzengruber, *Der Pfarrer von Kirchfeld*. [D. G. Rossetti, *Poems*.]
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1894. Sudermann, *Es war*.
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1898. Sudermann, *Johannes*. Hauptmann, *Fuhrmann Henschel*. Death of Bismarck. [E. Rostand, *Cyrano de Bergerac*.]
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